

MERRY ENGLAND.

MAY, 1883.

The Young England Movement :

ITS PLACE IN OUR HISTORY.

"They recognized imagination in the government of nations as a quality not less important than reason. They trusted much to a popular sentiment which rested on a heroic tradition, and was sustained by the high spirit of a free aristocracy. Their economic principles were not unsound, but they looked on the health and knowledge of the multitude as not the least precious part of the wealth of nations. . . They were entirely opposed to the equality of man. . . They held that no society could be durable unless it was built on the principles of loyalty and religious reverence."

THE above words, taken from the well-known preface to "Lothair," refer, it need hardly be said, to the writer's own works. "They" are books, not men. But the passage is by no means an insufficient description of the persons and the principles that directed what is called Young England. Without an investigation which would certainly be long, and would probably be tedious, it would not be easy to trace the copyright of the adjective young as applied in this way to a national substantive. In the second quarter of this century Young France, Young England, and Young Ireland successively

exemplified the compound in different ways. Young France was mainly literary and artistic, with a slight dash of politics, chiefly in the eccentric form of *bousingotisme*: Young Ireland was desperately political, with a slight infusion of literature; but Young England might justly claim to be a good deal wider in its aspirations than its forerunners who crowded to support *Hernani*, or its imitators who dilated on the excellence of the pike as a vehicle of reform, in the columns of the *Nation*. It was political first of all, but it took a wide view of politics, and it recognized *quicquid agunt homines* as part of the politician's subject and material. This was its main differentia, and in this lies the excuse for the foibles which, as in all such cases, attracted most popular attention to it. No doubt some of its members paid more attention to the fringe than to the stuff: that is usual and inevitable in all such movements. No doubt some joined it for the sake of the fringe only; that is also inevitable. But any one who talks and thinks of it as of a thing chiefly distinguished by the fact that one of its heroes invented white waistcoats, and by the fact that some of its followers emulated, or suggested, the harmless freaks of Mr. Lyle in "Coningsby," and Mr. Chainmail in "Crotchet Castle," may rest assured that he knows very little about it.

It is never very easy to trace the exact origin of the complicated phenomena which are called movements. Few people now-a-days fall into the slovenly error of attributing the Reformation wholly to Luther, or setting down the French Revolution to the machinations of an entirely unhistorical committee of three, composed of Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau. The movement now specially before us being a much looser, and a much less striking, as well as in its immediate effects a much more unimportant, example of its kind than either of these, is proportionately more difficult to isolate and to analyze. But it is perfectly certain that it was a branch or an offshoot, whichever word may be preferred, of

the great Romantic revival which affected all Europe during the first quarter of the century. This revival has been repeatedly judged in a summary fashion, and the judgments have not, as a rule, been very happy. The reason is not far to seek: it is to be found in the general omission to recognize the fact that it was a revolt, but a revolt against usurped authority, and so partook after all of the nature of reaction and restoration. The formulas of the Reformation and the Renaissance had crusted and crystallized the literary and political, as well as to a less degree the social life of Europe: the Romantic revival cracked the crust, and dissolved the crystals. It would lead us altogether too far to attempt the general results of this process, but one special result is the special subject before us. The political, social, literary, and religious life of England between the Revolution and the beginning of the nineteenth century had been exceptionally affected by the just mentioned formulas. It had not developed any gigantic abuses. There was no need of a French Revolution, and no general desire for one. English literature had at no time fallen into the portentous state which French literature presented when the great *philosophes* dropped off one by one. The English Established Church was, in comparison with several of the Protestant bodies on the Continent, orthodox in belief and influential in the State. But everything was conventional, and often most absurdly and contradictorily conventional. Morals were somewhat loose, but the code of manners was extraordinarily strict. The country was a free country, but the franchise was quaintly allotted, and seats were sold in the open market. The Government was a party Government; yet from the fall of Bolingbroke to the rise of Liverpool there were not a half a dozen statesmen who can be labelled as distinctly Whig or distinctly Tory in principle. The free and independent elector was the Omphalos of the constitution; but it was understood that the free and independent elector would for the most part vote for members of certain

houses, or those who were favoured by certain houses. It was the country of Shakespeare; yet men of genius and talent wrote "Irene" and "Douglas," and did not put them in the fire when they had written them. It was the country of Arthur (at least of the Arthurian legends) and Harold, of Cœur de Lion and Becket, of Chandos and Chaucer, of Occam and Scotus; and people talked contemptuously of the "dark ages," and never willingly looked beyond 1688, except to pay a regulation compliment to Queen Elizabeth and the Reformers. Of course there were exceptions to all this, but the general sentiment was as described. The sense of historic, social, literary, religious continuity was, if not lost, at any rate dulled. The pattern politician never looked beyond William the Deliverer: the pattern divine made as deep a trench at the Reformation as did his controversial opponents. Nobody, except a few eccentrics, could give a political reason for the faith that was in him, save out of the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement; and the Thirty-nine Articles in the same way closed the ecclesiastical horizon. English poetry began, by grace of Dr. Johnson, with Cowley; as for English social life, it began and ended with the conventional environment of the individual, with the fashion of the family, "the town," the neighbourhood, the Court, or what not. All this the Romantic movement, and its accompaniment the French Revolution, burst up in different ways; and most of those ways concern us a little, for most of them had something to do with Young England. It gradually drew into itself, or would have drawn, if it had ever become really powerful (for it must be remembered that it was, as far as direct effect went, very much of a *mouvement manqué*), the dandyism of Byron and D'Orsay, the mediævalism of Scott, the Anglicanism of Coleridge and Wordsworth. It never, perhaps, as a matter of history, moulded these various things and others into a doctrine of politics and sociology so coherent as that which its most illustrious politician formulates (somewhat as an

after-thought) in the motto of this article, but it assimilated them more or less unconsciously. Among the numerous synonyms of the strictly meaningless terms, "Tory" and "Whig," "traditional" and "doctrinaire," perhaps deserve a place. The Young England movement was in all things traditional in its revolt against eighteenth-century convention, just as its enemy the Radical party was above all things doctrinaire in carrying out the same revolt. The Radical (it is hardly necessary to say that in this opposition the Radical of fifty years ago is spoken of) could find no logical reason why men should not be equal in privileges, and proposed to make them so: Young England pointed out that they had never been anything of the kind historically, and proposed to leave them as they were. The Radical could think of nothing better than *laissez-faire* for the regulation of social problems apart from the question of political and religious privilege: Young England had an amiable, if somewhat visionary, theory of mutual assistance which in a different form has been oddly enough taken up by some Radicals of to-day. With regard to the Church and the aristocracy, the Radical, after trying in vain to argue down to them from his general principles, would have none of them: Young England had its memory filled with the exploits of both in the past, and its imagination with the possibilities of both in the future. It was thus at once, and in a remarkable fashion, both reactionary and innovating. It proposed to employ innumerable forces which the official convention of the eighteenth century ignored; but they were all forces to be connected with—to be geared on, so to speak—the traditional machinery of Government and society, and so to bring into play many wheels which the convention of the eighteenth century had neglected and left idle.

One of these forces was literature. The pen was, of course, no new power in politics, but it had latterly been considered a weapon for the irregulars. No prime minister, from Bolingbroke to Canning, left a literary reputation: Pulteney, and others who

followed Pulteney, wrote chiefly *en cachette*. This was, of course, the merest convention. It had no precedent before the eighteenth century, but the contrary: it had no foundation of reason whatever. Accordingly, the Young England movement was essentially a literary movement, and not least a literary movement applied to politics. The very dandies were not dandies merely, but wrote as earnestly as they dressed. They saw no reason why a gentleman should not be a gentleman of the press, and none why a gentleman of the press should not be a gentleman. In that there appears nothing at all extraordinary now. But when it is remembered that, by no means in the earliest days of the *Edinburgh Review*, Macvey Napier's contributors made little *minauderies* (which may yet be found in his correspondence) on the subject of receiving cheques, it may be seen that it required some courage to take the style and title which Mr. Disraeli took upon himself in the face of Parliament. The members of the movement, and especially one member, did more than despise the disqualification; they removed it: and in so doing they probably made not their least shocking innovation to steady-going Whigs and Tories, who looked on political writing, if not on all writing except that of an occasional poem or book of travels, as professional and undignified.

It is no part of the duty of the present writer to go through the list of the men who took part in the movement. To mention the dead without mentioning the living would be incomplete: to mention the living would be to enter on that domain of gossip and personality which, in the present day especially, faithful servants of history and literature are especially bound to eschew. The worst enemies of Young England can hardly deny that it was a singularly wide-reaching movement. The literature of it corresponds to its width of reach, and any review of that literature would be impossible in the present limits. It had dandy literature, poetical literature,

political literature—literature of all sorts and kinds. If it could have assumed a general motto, probably no better one could have been taken than the sentence from the “Life of Lord George Bentinck”: “The literary man who is a man of action is a two-edged weapon.” Some of its devotees “went in for” tournaments, some for social reform, some for society, some for politics, some for art. It would scarcely be unfair to claim for Young England, in different ways, Pugin and the “Graduate of Oxford,” Rossetti and Sir Henry Cole. It had an extraordinary influence on the Universities, a still more extraordinary influence on the estimate of artistic matters in the press. All this, it may be said, was a matter of fringe—to use the phrase which has been already adopted. Be it so; but the fringe is part of the garment, and it is the part which most catches and touches outward things. Fortunately, however, I am not reduced to arguing from mere retrospect. There is to be found, by any one who looks in the British Museum, a remarkable book, entitled “Anti-Coningsby,” and published in the year 1844. It is a very unequal book, and very badly planned; but there are passages and phrases in it which would not do discredit to Mr. St. Barbe himself. At the end of this book there is a satirical programme of a “Young England Journal.” The chief points in this programme may not be uninteresting, and are certainly unimpeachable as evidences of what was supposed by contemporaries to be the tendency of the movement. There are five points in this hostile representation. The “Young England Journal” will contain “slashing politics on both sides;” that is to say, it will advocate measures irrespective of the convenience of special sections of the actual governing cliques. It will contain unusually active foreign correspondence; that is to say, it will try and interest the average Briton in something beyond the cackle of his bourg. A very strong point is made (with the evident expectation of a laugh) over the “History of Cricket,” which a young Peer will write in it. Another deals with the

statistics which are to be given as to "the use of the new wash-houses." Lastly, a dead set is made on the display which will be made in the "Young England Journal" of "the virtues of Puseyism." These are the five points—omitting minor and personal matters—which the satirist marshals in his ironic charge against Young England. They were not of the orthodox Whigs or the orthodox Conservatives; they tried to interest Englishmen in the doings of the foolish foreigner; they took an interest in athletics; they condescended to such degrading particulars as the new wash-houses (washing-houses, to be very exact, is the form which our satirist prefers); and they held up the virtues of Puseyism.

Now let us look at these objects of the scorn of 1844 through the spectacles of 1883. It may be as well to assure a sceptical generation that they were not drawn up of malice prepense by the present writer. They happen, indeed, to have been published before he was born. But I think, if we look at public matters to-day, we shall hardly find that the subjects to which the "Young England Journal" was supposed to be about to devote its attention have been thrown into that dustbin which in forty years infallibly accepts political crotchets which have not life in them. "He was not of God," said Rochester of Cowley, profanely, doubtless, "and therefore he could not stand." The crotchets of 1844 have certainly stood. It would be very hard to bring the politics of either or any party to-day under those of one of those two "sides" which the scribe of forty years ago indignantly assumed that all respectable people must adopt. We are not quite so indifferent about foreign correspondence as he seems to have held that we should be, and it will even be found on inquiry that the most interesting events of the last twenty years have concerned that matter. The subscribers to a journal of to-day would hardly feel scorn, except that in the course of years the thing has probably been already done, at a person of title writing a history of cricket,

and athletics do not now occupy exactly the position which the satirist evidently thought they ought to occupy. Have we taken up his cue of sublime contempt of wash-houses, or have we interested ourselves more and more, as years have gone on, in wash-houses and all their kind? There are still, no doubt, varying opinions about the virtues of Puseyism; but it must be a singular social historian who will deny that what was at that date called Puseyism has grown and spread, and in itself or its offshoots gone far to cover the land in the last forty years. So the satirist's own Young England is at any rate tolerably justified of its works by the progress of time. The demolition of that purely selfish party spirit which saw all things in the conquest or retention of "twelve hundred a year," is something; the breaking down of the merely insular conception of English politics, is something; the development of the physical education of the people, is something; *sanitas sanitatum* is something; the revival of vivid religious emotion and the knitting afresh of the connection of religion and art, is something. These are truisms—propositions almost shameful to be advanced, because of the impossibility of denying them. Yet a belief in these propositions is what our satirist of forty years ago charges on Young England. On his head be it!

It is scarcely possible to reiterate too often the caution that the conscious and the unconscious tendencies of this particular movement cannot be too carefully separated. It has just been seen, if an enemy may be trusted, that the description of the Young England crusade, given in the early part of this article, is unimpeachable. No one can say *Quis vituperavit?* for we have the vituperation. But no doubt the movement was in many ways a blind movement. The very multiplicity of its aims, the diversity of its tendencies, the range of its sympathies, probably prevented most of those who took part in it from taking anything like a catholic survey of the field and the campaign. The accounts of its greatest leader are too characteristically fantastic

to be accepted literally. They are perfectly true as summaries of the facts, but they are not to be taken as absolutely trustworthy analyses of the motives. It is partly from looking at the results, partly from examining, as we have here examined, the testimonies of opponents, but most of all from comparison of the state of rival parties, that the true nature of this generally abortive yet specifically perfected movement, becomes evident. To the political student, who has some experience in English history, the second quarter of the century is a sufficiently dreary time, unless he has the gift to look before and after. The dull stupidity of the regular Whigs and Tories, each convinced that the country must be ruined if it did not employ them, and each willing to ruin the country if it bade them do so as the price of employment; the opportunism of the Peelites, as dull and as selfish, but destitute of the traditional orthodoxy which half excuses the others; the doctrinairism of the Radicals, dullest of all and least irradiated by any sentiment, though faintly relieved by a certain intellectual consistency, make up a grisly procession of phantoms flitting across the political stage, in a manner no doubt supremely important to themselves at the time, but singularly forlorn to the posterity of spectators. Amongst these the men of the Young England movement cannot be said to present a uniform or logically compact appearance. They are scattered, uncertain occasionally, futile often, running after a dozen hares at once, frequently failing to catch any. But they are at least generous, intelligent, conscious of the past, hopeful of the future, awake to the changed circumstances of modern life, and ready, each in his self-willed and confused way, with a plan of living to meet those circumstances. Not long ago we had a certain saying of Mencius held up to us in a Radical journal (I always like to quote authorities which cannot be suspected of extreme sympathy with my subject) as "worthy to be written in letters of gold in every legislative hall and municipal chamber in the country." The maxim is that, "if

the people are made to share in the means of enjoyment, they will cherish no feelings of discontent." I do not know whether Young England read Chinese: it certainly had no legislative hall or municipal chamber of its own. But the motto was its motto from the beginning. Long after it had as a movement merged in the general stream of progress, Peacock, who had satirized its earliest forms in "Crotchet Castle," returned as a kind of *revenant* to the world of novelists in "Gryll Grange." He then found a new development to laugh at. The young peer did not equip a baronial hall or write (to the deep disgust of the author of "Anti-Coningsby") on the history of cricket; but he lectured, and he was "pantoprismatic." It is twenty years and more since "Gryll Grange" was written, but young peers are expected to lecture and be pantoprismatic quite as much as ever. That is an offshoot of Young Englandism; whether good or bad, it is not to the present purpose to decide. It is sufficient to point out the numerous ways in which the movement did actually influence English life.

For, on the whole, the influence actually exerted was no doubt more social than political; and it is this which gives the subject its position here. It was of the very nature of the movement to blend social and political matters, and so in the long-run the social influence, transformed in the process, became a political one. But directly in the fusion of classes, or rather in the interesting of one class in another while retaining their division, and still more indirectly in its religious, artistic developments, Young England promoted a quiet social revolution. The historian of the future, if not of the present, will hardly hesitate about his answer to the question, Which have done the most for social progress, the Radical doctrinaires with their *reductio ad absurdum* in the Charter, or the advocates of cricket and wash-houses, of libraries and reasonable hours of work, of friendly communication between classes, of the spread of art, of religious services attractive to the general.

These latter ideas have of course long ceased to be the property of one party, political or other. In scuffling they change rapiers on that as on other stages, and the result is apt to be confusing to all but careful observers. The real tendency of the Young England movement is, as always, to be sought far less in the writings of those who supported it, than in the writings of those who opposed or stood aloof from it. A search on this principle, between 1840 and 1850, with a certain margin on either side of the decade, will not leave much doubt as to the real influence of the thing. Nowhere, for instance, is that influence more apparent than in the early writings of Charles Kingsley, certainly not a sympathiser with it or with many of its developments. Indeed, to trace the ramifications of agreement, dissent, protest, and silent adoption of more or less of the tendencies of the movement, would be to make a survey of the literature of the period. It is perceptible no less in "Past and Present" (far removed as Carlyle was from sympathy with Young England) than in the "Broad Stone of Honour;" little less in "The Princess" than in "Coningsby." If the greatest literary name of the period, next to Carlyle and Mr. Tennyson, was rebel to its influence and wrote chiefly against it, that is because Thackeray was, in the first place, a satirist before all, and, in the second place (like Mr. Pendennis), singularly weak on politics and general history, and extraordinarily John Bullish in his prejudices. Young England was not John Bullish—it might, perhaps, have been a little more so with advantage—and it certainly presented a good many handles to the enemy who had command of irony. It was exceedingly easy to represent its members as belonging to "the order of the *gilets blancs*," and it was not so easy for an adorer of the eighteenth century to forgive the contempt it poured on that period. The difference is of little importance now. Indeed, cynics who see all things in letters may be rather grateful for it as having given us the admirable parody

of "Codlingsby," and the scarcely less admirable caricature of "St. Barbe." It has only been mentioned here because, with what it is hard to regard as anything but simple stupidity, some good people have thought to show their allegiance to Thackeray by scoffing at Young England. That is not the attitude of the critic, who does not take sides in such matters.

To sum up the social purport of the movement, Young England aimed at dissolving the rigid barriers between the different classes of the population by the influence of mutual good offices, by the humanizing effects of art and letters, by a common enjoyment of enjoyable religious functions, by popularizing the ideas of national tradition and historical continuity, by restoring the merriment of life, by protesting against the exchange of money and receipt for money as a sufficient summary of the relations of man and man. These were undoubtedly its objects: it would be difficult to show that they were the objects of any other party, school, sect or class, at the time. But, and this is really the chief feather in the Young England cap, they were objects so obviously desirable that no one school, especially no one so loosely constituted, could monopolize them. English social life at large has, to a great extent, fallen into the lines thus indicated, generally without much consciousness of the indicators, and often with not a little expressed ingratitude to them; that, however, matters very little to the historian. Parties much more definite, leaders much more one-ideaed, persistent and successful, have before now gone long without recognition, much more without gratitude. But recognition, if not gratitude, comes sooner or later to most, and it may fairly come now to the despised patrons of cricket and wash-houses who afforded so much amusement to the satirist of forty years ago.

The political *mot*, on the other hand, of the Young England movement was not very different from that of the epigraph of

the portrait of Lord Beaconsfield, which illustrates this paper. It introduced the gentleman of the press to practical politics ; it made the politician a gentleman of the press. Before 1830 political government had, in the first place, been recognized as belonging more or less to a select circle of families and officials, and, in the second, it had busied itself with a very restricted range of subjects. Social matters rarely came before Parliament, though they sometimes forced their way in—just as outsiders sometimes forced their way into political place and power. The purpose, whether clearly or dimly understood and expressed, of Young England was to break down the monopoly while retaining the advantages of aristocracy ; to enlarge the sphere of the politician, and increase the number of levers on which he can work. It was opposed as much to the mechanical alternation of ready-made sets of governors which it found in its existence, as to the mechanical manipulation of the constituencies which has grown up since its time. Whether in such a country as England the ideal of a nation following its “natural” leaders (whether their letters of naturalization were due to birth or to brains) realizing the historic estimate sufficiently to prevent change for change’ sake, or for mere class interests, but open to improvement, was a chimerical ideal, there is no need to attempt to decide here. But of one thing there is no doubt, that Young England was the most striking political result in England of the vast Romantic revival, which influenced literature and religion so vitally ; and that in establishing the impossibility of separating political from social questions, it had in its turn at least one result which cannot fail to be permanent.

For polemical purposes certain persons have called it a harlequinade. We make much allowance in England for polemical purposes, and nobody knows better that it was much more than do some of the persons who so call it. It was indeed, as has been pointed out, in many ways a *mouvement manqué*.

The men who took part in it had too different and perhaps too inconsistent motives (as in effect they were bound to have from its nature) to bring it to any complete end. It lacked a general programme and a single purpose. Brilliant as was the talent of many who took part in it, none of them, perhaps, had that single-hearted and single-minded insanity of genius which carries a movement completely to its goal. But there is sufficient evidence to show that Young England on detached points was prophetic as well as enthusiastic, and that it divined and helped the tendency of the times in a manner which secures for it a place, and no mean place, in the social and political history of the country.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

The Light of the West.

IT is the eve of the fifth century of the Christian era. A vast darkness is slowly closing in over the known world ; one by one the landmarks are disappearing—the philosophies, the arts, all the schools, all the barriers against the savagery of the outside wilderness, are crumbling to pieces in the relaxing grasp of a sensual civilization. Slow and sure the waves of barbarian conquest rise around the wreck of empire, and the mighty fabric of Roman power is tottering to its final fall.

The unity of the Roman Empire is gone, anarchy and tumult are supreme ; factions, consuming each other in the capital, scarce cease their conflicts when the Goth is at the gate. Men of mean parentage or obscure birth are raised to the Imperial dignity, only to fall by poison or the dagger ; the great names have become shadows, the triumphs of human genius, the trophies of vast ambitions, the monuments of colossal power, are slowly sinking beneath the waves of a nocturnal sea.

The Roman soldiers are leaving Britain, the first Frank has entered Gaul. From the frosty summits of Alp and Apennine, long lines of savage enemies look down upon their prey. The time of the barbarian has come ; one thousand years of slavery have now to be avenged. Along the vast frontier sounds the dull roar of coming multitudes ; the boundaries of distant provinces tremble with the tramp of steed, and from Cumbria to sunlit Numidia the outposts of the old civilization are listening to the shrill trumpets of kings and chieftains summoning savagery to vengeance.

They come, gigantic Gothic footmen, from dim lands of marsh and forest beyond the Vistula ; they come, in hordes of

Hunnish horse, lithe-limbed and agile, from the vast plains that stretch into the sunrise beyond the Caspian ; they come in ceaseless crowds of Vandals and Visigoths, of Heruli and Franks, across Carpathian steep and Pannonian plain, up the valleys of great rivers, over the wintry waves of Baltic and Euxine ; they come, like lava from the mountain, to burn and wither the earth—like floods of winter, to ravage and submerge the land ; they come, led by Alaric and Genseric and Attila, and a thousand nameless leaders, moving in the might of multitudes—to the wreck of Rome.

While thus, in whirlwinds of flame and blood, the reign of Imperial Rome is about to close, let us carry our thoughts into a lonely island of the Western Ocean, upon whose shores the Imperial eagle had never rested, and whose green valleys now lie, in this end of the fourth century, untouched by the waves of ruin that sweep the Empire from Britain to the Euphrates.

It is early morning in summer ; rising from deep-indented shores, green hills merge into mountains over whose topmost peaks the sea mists slowly trail, the russet hillsides glisten in the sunlight with the sheen of water on smooth rocks. Freshness is over all the land ; freshness varying through many passing moods of sun and shadow—of winds that come straight from the crests of sea-waves to catch perfumes on furze-covered capes and heathery hillsides ; freshness of valleys that are deep in green grasses and yellow flagger lilies ; freshness of streams where shallows sparkle in sunlight, and great curves of tranquil water are fringed with meadow-sweet ; freshness of green rushy banks by lake and river, where the tall grey heron stands motionless, and the swallows skim, and the broad-leaved water-lilies are golden isles to tempt the dragon-flies to rest.

Summer is coming early to this island, and all the woods and glades are speaking his advent in voices of bird and brook and breeze, as sweet in sound as woods and waters are fresh in sight.

The lingering cuckoo floats his note from glade to glade, so softly sweet that all the poetry begotten of man's brain in spring-time's honour, since the world began, is but music's mockery in comparison.

Let us take our stand in fancy upon the hillside, midway between the sea-mist on the rugged crest and the green valley at the mountain foot ; above us, the heather, beginning to tinge with the purple of summer, is sleeping in sunlight ; still higher the white folds of sea-mists are lifting themselves from the topmost teeth of crags that hold their feathery fragments, dissolving into space ; high over all, black specks against blue heaven, a couple of golden eagles are soaring in great circles upon moveless pinion.

Below lie outspread all the jewels that lake and stream, copse and meadow, smooth-rounded hillside, tree-covered island, can deck the face of the earth with. Far off, between hills, a glimpse of blue sea stretches to the sky-line. Around us the mountain holds, in deep glen and along the bank of rushing stream, clump and copse of hoary oak, scarred with the slowly accumulated sinew of centuries ; of birch tree, upon whose silvery stem the sunlight glistens through the green of early leaves ; of yew and hazel bush ; of holly, still bright with berries of last year's autumn ; and hawthorn, still glowing with white blossoms of a lingering spring.

In an open glade between the woods, where the grass of the lower mountain is beginning to give place to hardier heather, a flock of sheep spreads out over the hillside ; above them on the mountain is the solitary figure of a man, one in the first prime of life. A large wolf-dog lies at his feet, for the woods and glens hold many a prowling animal in their rugged fastnesses.

From his station by the big rock, the shepherd has in sight the entire ground over which his sheep are feeding. At times his eyes wander across the vast scene of wood, lake and valley

lying beneath, and now and again he scans with wistful glance the distant strip of blue sea, bounded by the remote horizon. Then, as though that glimpse of far-off ocean had stirred his soul to other memories, he kneels upon the mountain side and bows his head in long and fervent prayer. Strange sight, this solitary shepherd thus kneeling in prayer upon the lone mountain of this Western island! The rugged rock yields him altar-step; the heather and the hawthorn give him incense; the dome of heaven is his church roof; and up above the mountain tops, above the white clouds, all the matchless music of the summer goes floating heavenwards, higher than the eagles soar, bearing his prayer to the throne-step of God. But we must go back deeper into the bygone.

Ninety years earlier, in the very beginning of the fourth century, there had come a solitary wanderer to the ocean end of Rome's great highway in Northern Gaul, where now, somewhere north of Amiens town, the white cliffs of Boulogne face the narrow strip of sea. For 300 years before, along this broad paved highway, whose miles were measured from its golden post set in the Roman Forum, myriads of men moving in the might of arms had passed to conquest; hither had come Cæsar, Agricola, Suetonius, Severus, and Adrian, with hosts of cohorts, legions, and armies, marching to do battle with fierce tribes in northmost Britain; but now all these have passed away, and only a solitary pilgrim, with staff and cleric's robe, dust-marked and travel-worn, comes, bearing to this verge of Northern Ocean a strange and lustrous light—that light, the same which 300 years before had first shone, "filled with the brightness of God," upon lowly shepherds keeping midnight watch on the cold hills of Bethlehem. So had this light hitherto been borne, through all the intervening years, to wherever in southern space this wandering pilgrim had caught its radiance, and, filled with its glory, had turned him northwards to bear it to the furthest bounds of Empire. He was only doing what many a

nameless and forgotten pilgrim had already done—what many a nameless pilgrim had yet to do ; he was carrying the “brightness of God” a little further, ere it was time for him to lie down beside the Roman highway, and to rest.

And what had this light been doing, as thus in the hands of the poor and lowly of the great Pagan world it came gleaming along all the roads of Rome? Ah, that indeed would be a story difficult to tell. It had fallen through the rusty gratings of damp dungeons, gilding the captive’s chain until the fetter seemed soft as the clasp of angels’ fingers around weary wrists. It had stolen into the dreams of millions of tired slaves, until their worn features brightened, and their dry lips moved in the ecstasy of its gleam. It had shone upon the heart of the victim in the arena, so that torment and terror came unheeded to human bodies soul-steeled in the white radiance of its lustre. It had hovered over timid women in the yelling amphitheatre, clothing their nakedness in shining garments, blinding them to the glare of famished animals, giving to them a constancy that made Pagan soldier and centurion poor cowards in their craft of courage. This, and a thousand times this, it had done over all the vast dominion of Rome ; for these scenes in prison or amphitheatre were only the visible signs of the great change wrought in the interior life of man on earth—hill-tops double-steeped in the “brightness of God,” standing out along the horizon of a new creation. And now, as we have already said, this light has reached the end of Rome’s great road, its bearer to be here received, as elsewhere others, with contempt of governor, derision of populace, and finally with death at hands of headsman ; but here, as elsewhere, the light itself to spread silently among the hearts of men, and to kindle in souls fresh rays, which are to be borne onward through space of seas to the shores of far-off islands. It was about the year 302 when Firmin, torchbearer and saint, laid his tired head upon the block at Amiens. How well

the harvest grew upon his grave—how quick the torch was carried forward beyond the Roman roadways, we have now to see.

Thirty years go by. The great road is still pressed by footsteps of cohorts, passing to do battle far north in Britain against wildest Pict, or to oppose the nearer but more persistent pressure of Frank invasion from the fens and forests of the lower Rhine. It is winter time; snow lies over all the wide plateau, far as the eye can reach east and west of the Roman road. But the scene we would recall has already been told by a master in words that can scarcely be heard too often. He says :*—"Somewhere about this spot" (a hill, half a mile south of Amiens city), "or in the line between it and St. Acheul, stood the ancient Roman gate of the Twins, whereon were carved Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf, and out of which, one bitter winter's day, when Clovis was baptized, had ridden a Roman soldier, wrapped in his horseman's cloak, on the causeway which was part of the great Roman road from Lyons to Boulogne. And it is worth your while, also, some frosty autumn or winter's day, when the east wind is high, to feel the sweep of it at this spot, remembering what chanced here, memorable to all men, and serviceable in that winter of the year 332, when men were dying of cold in Amiens streets—namely, that the Roman horseman, scarce gone out of the city gate, was met by a naked beggar, shivering with cold; and that, seeing no other way of shelter for him, he drew his sword, divided his own cloak in two, and gave him half of it. No ruinous gift, nor even enthusiastically generous. Sydney's cup of cold water needed more self-denial; and I am well assured that many a Christian child of our day, himself well warmed and clad, meeting one naked and cold, would be ready enough to give the whole cloak off his own shoulders to the necessitous one, if his better-advised nurse or mamma would let him. But the Roman soldier was no

* Ruskin.

Christian, and did his serene charity in simplicity, yet with prudence.

“Nevertheless, that same night he beheld in a dream the Lord Jesus, who stood before him in the midst of angels, having on His shoulders the half of the cloak he had bestowed on the beggar.

“And Jesus said to the angels that were around him, ‘Know ye who hath thus arrayed me? My servant Martin, though yet unbaptized, has done this.’ And Martin, after this vision, hastened to receive baptism, being then in his twenty-third year.

“Whether these things ever were so, or how far so, credulous or incredulous reader, is no business whatever of yours or mine. What is and shall be everlastingly so—namely, the infallible truth of the lesson therein taught, and the actual effect of the life of St. Martin on the mind of Christendom—is very absolutely the business of every rational being in any Christian realm.”

Here, then, in thirty years, the seed planted by Firmin has grown into a stately tree; already, under the dead husk of Paganism, the hearts of men are Christian, and at the furthest fringe of the Empire a Roman knight can be a soldier of the Cross. Another thirty years pass by, and still greater has become the change. It is no longer the lowly and the outcast who carry the sacred light; the catacomb has been exchanged for the hill-top; the Cross has been stamped upon the standards of Rome; and over the shattered systems of twelve centuries—over the wreck of Pagan rule, and the ruin of Pagan temple, the sunrise of Christianity is flashing light upon the crests of the Western Ocean.

Among the mass of material that has come down to us from Roman times, there is little that shows the life of a Roman citizen in the provinces of the Empire—his every-day existence—his buying, his selling, his hours of indolence or of exertion. The great machinery of the national existence is

fully unfolded to us. There is no lack of the collective vice or virtue of an epoch—no want of detail in the surroundings of the central figures ; but the inner life of a Roman province or a Roman city lies hidden for ever, save where, preserved under the cinders of volcanoes, it has been exhumed by the pick and shovel of the modern excavator. Strange that to irruptions of barbarians, and an eruption of Vesuvius, we should owe both the darkness of our ignorance and the light of our knowledge of the every-day life of the Roman world.

But of all the dark times of that Roman world, the darkest is this twilight hour immediately preceding the final disruption of the barriers, about the year of Christ 365. The gloom of that great disaster, in which the apostate Emperor had lost life and army, far down in the remote regions of the lower Euphrates, had spread over the Roman world, carrying messages of terror to Roman citizens, and joyous exultation to bordering barbarians along 4,000 miles of frontier.

A hundred fierce tribes sprang to arms. The Picts, the Scots, and Attacotti, passed the wall of Severus, and poured down upon the frightened inhabitants of Britain ; the Saxons swept the eastern coasts ; the Western Sea “ foamed with the hostile oars ” of the Irish rovers ; and only within the fortified cities of the island could the broken remnants of the Roman legions find safety.

During four dark years the northern barbarians and their Saxon and Irish allies revelled in all the luxury of life which Roman dominion had created in Britain. But at last there came a change. The end of the great Empire was not yet to be. Another generation has to pass away ere the impending mass of outside Gothic power will summon courage sufficient to hurl itself at the heart of Rome. Tribes which had panted on the Vistula for the plunder of Roman provinces paused as they neared the Danube ; chiefs who vaunted of easy conquest on the Elbe grew wary as they beheld, across the Rhine, the

standards of Rome. It was now, while the gloomy masses of Germanic manhood held back, daunted on the threshold of the Empire by the spectre and the shadow of the Roman name, that there passed into Britain a large Roman army, to avenge the insults and defeats borne during many years at the hands of northern invaders of the island. Of the progress of this army we have but scant and conflicting record. Vague and dim the rescuing legions loom as they march northward into the wilds of Caledonia amid the swarming hosts of light-armed Gaels, whose southern limit of conquest the ocean alone had stayed. But the Roman legions were no longer Romans. Heruli from Pannonia, Franks from the lower Rhine, formed the flower of the army. Nor was there along the vast length of the Imperial frontier, from Danube mouth to mud and moraine of Rhine's wide delta, a hardy tribe of barbarians which had not some stalwart representatives among the legions of Theodosius. And so much to our purpose this fact, however widely it may seem to lie beyond the scope of the story we would here tell.

And now it may well be asked what connexion can there be between the lonely shepherd, the Roman officer, giving half his cloak to the shivering beggar on the road outside the present city of Amiens, in 330, and the march of the army of Theodosius thirty-seven years later into Britain? Only this much, that three positive facts relative to that shepherd come to us from that far away time with whatever of certainty there is possible to history. The first, that he, the lonely shepherd, was a Roman youth taken prisoner by sea-rovers on some part of the coast of Gaul or of Britain; the second fact, that he was either the nephew or the grand-nephew of that Roman horseman whose cloak was halved with sword-cut on that memorable winter's day outside the gate of present Amiens; the third, that this same shepherd was the son of an officer in the Roman army, sometime stationed in Gaul and sometime in

Britain. Here then, around Amiens, at the end of the great Roman road, and at the end of the last century of Roman Empire, we have with certainty one central point linking together the widely severed scenes in the shepherd's life which for many hundreds of years have taxed the minds of those who have tried to picture the gloom of dim and distant centuries, and to place in certainty of sequence the story of Patrick, Apostle of the Gaels and Light of the West. "He was born in North Britain, in 372," writes Usher. "By the shores of the Irish Sea," says Jocelyn. "Not far from the Western Sea," writes Probus. "At Banaven, in the territory of Tabernia, my father dwelt, and it was there that I was made prisoner," says Patrick in his "Confession." But who shall now identify Banaven, in the territory of Tabernia? Various attempts have been made: Boulogne, Dumbarton, Armorica, Tours—all have found supporters to their different claims. But it is only by a close study of the movements of the Roman legions in Gaul and Britain in the last half of the fourth century, that we begin to see the link that exists between the facts of relationship and parentage, which clearly centre in northern Gaul, and the suppositions regarding Patrick's birthplace and scene of captivity, which have vexed the minds of historians and biographers. Let us pause a moment to inquire how the movements of Roman armies and the composition of the various legions can help us as side-lights on our way. But first we will set down the facts of relationship and parentage which have descended to us undisputed.

Martin, by profession Roman knight or soldier; by birth, barbarian of Dacia; by nature, God's noblest man, in Roman Empire or without it—is serving in northern and eastern Gaul throughout the middle of the fourth century, where also are quartered at this time the three legions called the Celtæ, the Heruli, and the Batavians or Franks; the Celtæ recruited from the Gaels of Ireland and Scotland; the Batavians from

Franks of the lower Rhine; the Heruli from a warlike people dwelling on the borders of Dacia and Pannonia. These three legions, themselves barbarian, formed the strength of the Roman army against the unknown mass of outside barbaric force, then dimly stretching from the Rhine to the Volga. That the legionaries regarded themselves as fixtures in Gaul is certain, for their engagement in the Imperial service was strictly conditional upon their never being called upon to serve beyond the Alps; and that they had with them in Gaul their wives and family belongings is also clear beyond doubt, from the fact that when Constantius, despite this public pledge of service only in Gaul, summoned them to march to his assistance in the Persian War, "the wives and families of the soldiers" were transported in post waggons from the northern garrisons on the road to the Alps. This was in 360. Here, then, we have Dacian and Batavian soldiers—all of them "Franks" or Freeman, in contradistinction to Romans, or Subjectmen—living with their wives and families in that wide region which to-day forms North-eastern France, Luxemburg, Belgium and Lorraine. Seven years from this date—viz., in 367—Julian having meantime disappeared, and the Cross again become the standard of the soldiers, these same veteran legions, Heruli and Batavians, have crossed from Gaul to Britain, and are pushing back, under Theodosius, the Caledonian tribes beyond the wall of Severus, in northmost Britain, giving to Rome, even in her decadence, a new province beyond the Cheviot Hills. So much for the nationality of the legionaries, and the movements of the legions during this decade of years, 360 to 370. Let us now see how these nationalities and these movements suit the purpose of our story. We have already said that the shepherd on the Irish hills was either the nephew or the grand-nephew of the Roman knight, Martin of Amiens, once of Dacia; and also that he was the son of a Roman officer (nationality uncertain, but probably Frank), sometime stationed in Gaul and

sometime in Britain. Yet one other fact regarding his parentage. His mother, Conchessa by name, had been taken captive by the Franks in her youth, about 365, and became the wife of one Calphurnius, son of her captor. Conchessa, member of a Roman officer's family (Roman officer being a Pannonian, and therefore probably in Heruli legion), is taken prisoner by Frankish Calphurnius, who must therefore be fighting against Rome, in or about 364; but Calphurnius is a Roman officer a few years later, certainly in 372; he must then have changed sides during these intervening eight years. Let us see if again the history of the Roman legions can help us to solve this apparent contradiction.

We have already alluded to the general uprising of bordering barbarians which followed the death of Julian and the disasters of the Persian War. The first efforts of the Emperor Valentinian were directed to repair and repress the damages and the incursions of the formidable bands of Alemanni and Franks, which had penetrated deep into the Rhenish provinces of Gaul. Here is what Gibbon says: "Before Valentinian could cross the Alps the villages of Gaul were in flames; before his general, Dagalaiphus, could encounter the Alemanni, they had secured the captives and the spoil in the forests of Germany. In the beginning of the ensuing year (364) the military force of the whole nation, in deep and solid columns, broke through the barrier of the Rhine, during the severity of a northern winter. Two Roman counts were defeated and mortally wounded, and the standard of the Heruli and the Batavians fell into the hands of the conquerors, who displayed with insulting shouts the trophy of their victory." Then follows the account of the campaign undertaken by Valentinian to revenge these disasters, which had taken place on the ground where Metz and Châlons now stand. The Herulian and Batavian legions were led by the Emperor in person, and, after a series of desperate battles, forced the Alemanni across the Rhine, and

re-established the Imperial boundary at that river, where, we are told, he raised "numerous levies of barbarian youth" for the future protection of the empire. Here, then, we have the Franks raiding far into northern Gaul in 363, defeating the legion composed of Martin's countrymen, Heruli, and carrying them captives to the Rhine. We have the Frankish legion in pursuit the following year, and we find it recruiting largely on the frontier from the same barbarian tribes so lately at war with Rome. Three years after this, we have these two legions in Britain under Theodosius, their chief scene of operations for some years later lying around the wall of Severus.

Is it trespassing too far into conjecture to point out this chain of historical events as holding within it the solution of all the apparent contradictions in Patrick's relationship, parentage, birthplace, and scene of capture—bringing together Martin's long residence in Northern Gaul—Frankish father and Pannonian mother (Martin's niece)—subsequent service of father in Roman Legion—movement into Britain and residence behind the frontier wall of Severus? And, if we go a step farther, and place "Banaven in Tabernia, by the shores of the Irish Sea," somewhere on the coast of Cumberland, where Whitehaven—*i.e.*, "Banaven"—stands to-day—does not such identification suit the probable contingencies of the shepherd's capture by rovers from Northern Ulster, rather than the usually accepted scene by the estuary of the Somme, where so frequently it has been placed? Having said all this, trying to pierce the dim vista of the centuries, we will go back to the young shepherd and his flock on the hills of Erin. Captive from Gaul or from Britain—it matters little which—he has henceforth to be dealt with through life upon conditions which no longer need to be read by the light of Roman history. Henceforward he becomes a living reality in the world's story; his figure ever more to loom big above the years. He stands before us at this time in these, his own, words: "After I had come to Ireland,"

he tells us, "I was daily tending sheep, and many times in the day I prayed, and more and more the love of God and the light of His faith and fear grew in me, and my spirit was stirred, so that in a single day I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same. When I dwelt in the woods and on the mountains, I was called to prayer before the dawn by the snow, the ice, and the rain. Nor did I suffer from these things, nor was there sloth in me, for the Spirit was burning within me."

Burning, as a solitary light, was this shepherd's Christian faith on those wild Irish hills. All around is the darkness of Paganism. From north to south, from east to west, the Druid is supreme in the island. The great idol of Guthard stands erect on the plains of Cavan: and the sun, as he tops the eastern hills, or sinks into the vast ocean in the west, pours his morning and evening beams upon millions of his worshippers.

For six years the life of the hill, the life of the valley and the plain, was the shepherd's lot. Captive from his home and his people; condemned to labour among strangers at the bidding of a stranger; exposed to whatever storm the wild winds might bring him, he dwells amid the misty mountains of Ulster, forming in his mind one fixed resolve—that the bondsman would deliver his masters from the chains of their idolatry, and from the darkness of Paganism the captive would set free his captors.

The years pass on—the youth has grown to manhood. Still sleeps the summer heather in the sunshine, the sea mist still trails along the hill-top, and morning after morning the grey strip of ocean lies athwart the severed hills; glimpse of freedom and home, sweet to the shepherd's eye as sunlight through prison bars would be to weary captive. Yet think not that these years of servitude have been wasted—fragments of time, broken bits of life flung into the vast gulf of the past; body and brain, soul and sense, have grown and ripened, become

purified, steeled, strengthened, and solaced—growing in the spaces of mountain and the solitude of the woodland, strengthening in the freshness of the spring, ripening in the fulness of summer sunshine, steeled by the wintry tempest, purified by the prayer of lonely nights, and solaced by that same voice which, 400 years before, first spoke to shepherds keeping night watch on the hills of Judæa: “Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all people.”

And now these things have done their work—the solitude and the seasons, the sunset and the storm, can teach no more. It is time that the young man should go forth to other scenes: far away by the broad current of the Loire, where Martin now, from sword and crozier resting, is waiting for the final peace—further off still, where Germanus dwells at Auxerre, and out in the blue waves of the Mediterranean, where the rocks of Lerins are soon to bloom with flowers and fruit at the hands of Honoratus and his followers. But there is still another scene to be visited by the shepherd, grander than aught else the world can show: a scene never again to be looked upon by the eyes of men after ten years shall have passed away. It is Rome, before the barbarian has placed his foot within her Forum. In this year, 400, the great city stands in all her matchless magnificence, crowning her hills, spreading into her now lonely Campagna, and opening her twelve colossal gates through stupendous walls which are more than twenty miles in circuit. How infinitely far apart it all is! This lonely island in the western sea, where never Roman soldier has set his foot, where the rude pillar-stone stands amid the storm-swept gorges of the old grey hills, and the gigantic cromlech rises upon the misty sea-verge of windy promontories; and then this vast Imperial city, seated on her seven hills, sated with the plunder of the world during seven centuries of dominion—grand beyond all human grandeur, her temples, her palaces, her amphitheatres; rich beyond all other richness, her gold, her silver, her precious

gems ; all waiting in the twilight of this, the eleventh hour, for Alaric and his hungry Goths.

One night, lying asleep in hut or cavern, amid the Ulster hills, the shepherd is dreaming of his far-off kinsfolk in Gaul. "Thou fastest well ; thou shalt soon go to thy country," a voice seems to whisper to him. "Behold ! thy ship is ready." And, rising from sleep, he sets his face towards the south, travels day by day until the sea is reached, and, after many vicissitudes by land and sea, is at last a free man in Gaul. And now a long thirty years go by ; freedom and friends, long unknown, are sweet, and for a little while they tempt the man to loiter on the road he has chosen.

It would be so much easier to sit down by Loire-side vineyards, where the chimes ring sweetly from Marmoutiers towers, and the vesper song floats on the broad waters, as the sun sinks beneath the long reach of golden river.

Yes, it would be pleasant ; but it was not for this that hunger and tempest had been borne on the Irish hills—it was not for this that the snow and the rain had called him to prayer in the long nights of winter. Again in the midnight hour a voice whispers in his sleep—this time a voice raised in supplication—"Come back to us and teach us—come back to us and walk again among us," they seem to cry to him from some far-away shore. "I thought," he tells us, "the voice was the voice of the Irish coming to me from the woods of Foclut, near the shore of the Western Sea."

But how is he to teach a nation ? "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, because he is the angel of the Lord of Hosts." Knowledge : the frail bark that now holds its flickering lamp, is struggling amid dark and tempestuous seas. The Vandals are over-running Spain—two hundred thousand Goths look down upon the Arno from the rocks of Fésolé—the Burgundians are penetrating far into Gaul. Behind, in gloomy succession, come

Alemanni, Suevi, and yet further off the Hun looms dark against the sunrise. But great men stand on the deck, ready to lift the frail vessel well over the waves beneath which the Roman world is for ever to perish. St. Ambrose at Milan, St. Germain at Auxerre, St. Augustine in Africa, St. Jerome in Asia, and countless soldiers lost in the stream of Time, are placed full in the path of the barbarians, to conquer with the Cross what the sword of Empire shall fail to vanquish. Mark this difference between the missionary of that day and some missionaries of this! No mere enthusiasm for the task of heathen conversion was enough—an enthusiasm which frequently evaporates, leaving a comfortable cleric with a comforting wife to survey a well-filled quiver and an empty church. No, they managed those things differently in the fifth century. Let us see how the shepherd proceeded to store his brain with the “knowledge” which was to be given forth to those who were to “seek the law at his mouth,” when the voice of the Irish “called him from home.” In the College of the Lateran at Rome, at Lerins on the Tuscan Sea, at Auxerre in Gaul, for nearly thirty years he studied to prepare himself for the task. From “the mother and the head of all the churches of the city and the world,”* he learns the great lessons of Faith and Doctrine; from the toilers of the Lerins rocks he catches the true spirit of human labour, of charity to all men, of patient and unselfish toil. In Germanus he sees the best type of the ruler and the leader of men, one who, as Roman governor, had studied the characters of subject and hostile races, and whose dignity could awe the rough Burgundian into reverence. Such the master and the schools in which the shepherd Patrick studied for nigh thirty years. Think over it well, ye modern missionaries, who marvel why the heathen hears ye not, and the walls of Paganism fall not down before your psalm song!

* Inscription over the door of the Lateran.

And now these thirty years of study and preparation have passed away ; he is again in Erin. The Easter Eve, 433, is falling dark and cold upon all the realm of Ireland—dark and cold because to-morrow is sacred to the idols—and it has long been ruled in Druids' law that on the night preceding the great feast of Teamhair no fire is to burn on hearth or hill—no light is to gleam from palace or hovel until the flame of the sacred pile, kindled by the king on the green "rath" at Tara, shall be seen burning over the plains of Meath. So the twilight comes down, the light lessens in the west, and the wide landscape is wrapt in deep and solemn gloom, as though it had been a land in which man's presence was unknown. While yet the sun was high in heaven, the missionary had quitted his boat in the estuary of the river Boyne, and had passed on foot along the river valley towards the interior of Meath. Evening found the little band encamped upon a grassy ridge on the north side of the Boyne, and overlooking the winding channel of that river. To the south, some miles away, the hill of Tara was in sight. The March evening fell chilly upon the pilgrims ; but the hill-side yielded store of furze-faggot and oak-branch, and soon a camp fire blazed upon the ridge, casting around a wide circle of light into the momentarily deepening sea of darkness. What memories of far-off nights on the Antrim hills come to the pilgrim over the mists of thirty years, as here he stands in the firelight, on Irish soil again. How much has passed since last the furze-faggot warmed his lonely shepherd's bivouac ! How much has yet to be in all yon grim surrounding gloom ere his task shall be accomplished ! Never in all the ages of the world has the might of savage man been more manifest on the earth. Already the Vandal king is in Carthage ; the Visigoths are seated at Toulouse ; Attila has reached the Rhine, having ridden his charger over the ashes of the Eastern Empire.

But here, in the light of this solitary fire, stands an unarmed,

defenceless man, who, even now, keeps this Easter Eve as a vigil of battle against the powers of Pagan darkness, throned over yonder in all the might of armed multitudes.

The darkness deepens over the scene ; the March winds smite the faggot flame, and around the lonely bivouac the breezes come filled with the vast sadness of the night. Feeble to outward sense must seem the chances of the coming struggle. But the inner sense of the Great Missionary may this night be looking upon a different vision. Beyond the bleak ridge and circle of firelight—out beyond void of darkness, perchance those deep-sunk eyes are beholding glimpses of future glory to the Light he has come to spread ; and it may be that his ear, catching in the echoes of the night wind the accents of ages yet to be, is hearing wondrous melodies of sound rolling through the starlight. Look well upon that fire, Great Messenger of God to the Gael ; the flame thou feedest with the furze and the oak faggot is a light never more to die from this island. Kings of twenty lines shall rule the ridge of Tara, where now the Pagan monarch is watching, with jealous eye, the fire thou hast kindled. Wars and devastations, inroads and invasions, shall sweep the land, and its hill-sides shall see fire and famine, and its valleys shall hear wail and lamentation ringing through myriad ages yet unborn ; but never, through the vast catalogue of thy children's sorrow, shall this light of thine be quenched. Nay, the tears and travail of coming generations shall be but fresh fuel to spread over God's earth this holy flame—beyond the shores, beyond the oceans, into continents yet unborn, the sacred light will touch the hill-tops of Time until it merges at last into the endless radiance of Eternity !

One other scene out of many from that far-away time, and we have done. The fifth century is near its end. The task has been accomplished, the old man's course is nearly run. No idol stands erect in Erin. Meadow and mountain, flagger-

lilled valley and heathery hill-top, hear the chimes of vesper bell as the sun goes down. On lonely sea rocks, and treeless, wind-swept capes, the hermit has his cell, and from shore to shore the green island in the Western wave is wholly Christian.

There is a legend of olden time which tells of a vision seen by the Apostle a short while before his death. In that vision he is shown the future of the island for whose good he had dared and done so much. The sight, full of sorrow, of trial, of suffering, of anguish, wrung the old man's heart, and he cried aloud in the darkness: "Will God thus cast off His people for ever?" and then a voice answered through the night, bidding him look out into the distant future, for beyond the gloom there was light, and beyond the sorrow there was hope.

Yes, there was light far away in the West—out in the great ocean—far down below the sunset's farthest verge—from westmost hill-top the New World lay waiting for the light. It came—borne by the hands of Ireland's starving children. The old man tottered with the precious burthen from the fever-stricken ship; the young child carried the light in feeble hands to the shore; the strong man bore it to the Western prairies, and into the cañons of snowy sierras; the maiden brought it into the homestead to be a future dower to her husband and a legacy to her children; and lo! ere famine's night had passed from Ireland, the Church of Patrick arose o'er all that vast new world of America, from where the great St. Lawrence pours its crystal tide into the daybreak of the Atlantic, to where California flings wide her golden gate to the sunsets of the Pacific. Nearly 1,400 years have passed away since, on the 17th of March, 493, Patrick passed from earth to Heaven. Empires have flourished and gone down, whole peoples have passed away, new faiths have arisen, new languages have sprung up, new worlds have been born to man; but those fourteen centuries have only fed the fire of that faith which he taught the men of Erin, and have spread into a wider horizon the

light he kindled. And if there be in the great life beyond the grave a morning trumpet-note to sound the *réveille* of the army of the dead, glorious indeed must be the muster answering from the tombs of fourteen centuries to the summons of the Apostle of the Gaels.

Nor scarce less glorious can be his triumph when the edge of sunrise, rolling around this living earth, reveals on all the ocean isles and distant continents, the myriad scattered children of the Apostle, whose voices, answering that sunrise roll-call, re-echo in endless accents along the vaults of heaven.

W. F. BUTLER.

Blackbird.

I.

I AM come to my favourite acacia, if you please,
With a whistle, and a chuckle, and a rustle of my wings ;
I am not in any hurry, but intend to sing at ease,
Of the flowers, and the weather, and a world of other things.
Whistle, merry birdie, whistle, while you whistle may :
I would not live in London town for a thousand pounds
a day.

II.

I am told that men keep birdies there, in a trap they call a cage,
And they stuff them up with dainties, to enable them to sing ;
But the poor things have no spirit to attempt to earn their wage,
And they only gasp for the airy breeze, and only dream of
spring.
Whistle, roving birdie, whistle ; liberty alway
Gives a chance of getting out of anything we say.

III.

Yet the robin, and the cuckoo, and the puny willow-wren,
And the lintie, and the lavrock, and the white-throat, and
the thrush,
Grind a ditty, like a hurdy-gurdy, o'er and o'er again,
Going on about their families in a way to make you blush !
Whistle, like a fluter, I can whistle far away ;
Other birds may sing a little, but they cannot play.

IV.

For their notes are very flat, and their variety is none,
And their manners are indelicate and vulgar, I'm afraid ;
But for my part, I am ready to be shot at with a gun,
Before I say a syllable that ought to be unsaid.
Whistle, modest birdie, whistle to the winds at play ;
Winds may try to toss me, but I have lighter wings
than they.

V.

Now I ought to be in mourning for my elder brother's nest,
Which was torn to pieces by a cat, a night or two ago ;
But to have so many relatives gives loss of them a zest,
And their going off prevents their always coming to and fro.
Whistle, loving birdie, whistle, till your grief is gay ;
'Tis a livelier thing to hop the twig, than to mope upon
the spray.

VI.

Let me tell you, my own family is enough, and some to spare ;
So many now in feather, and so many more in egg !
And their mouths are always open, of a size to make you stare,
And the moment I have filled them, up they come again
and beg !
Whistle, father birdie, whistle household cares away ;
Household cares would turn me soon from a black bird
to a gray.

VII.

Lo, my eldest son is bird enough to pronounce a gallant chuck,
When he pounces on a dewy worm, and pegs him like a nail ;
And my fashionable daughter is a dainty little duck,
Who has learned the art of strutting with her head upon her
tail !
Whistle, happy birdie, whistle a domestic lay :
When a bird has done his duty, let his heart be gay.

VIII.

Yet in spite of all my labours, and position of high trust,
There are people who are low enough to scout me as a thief!
That idea I repudiate, with infinite disgust,
And assure you, on my honour, that it is below belief.
Whistle, honest birdie, whistle scornfully—but stay,
Here comes the fellow that prowls about with a gun
for me, all day!

IX.

He is wicked, but the Lord has not enabled him to shoot;
I can dodge him in and out, behind the twinkle of a leaf.
And if I may not wet my whistle with a bit of fruit,
His want of liberality proves him the biggest thief.
Whistle, clever birdie, whistle, to show him the way;
Has that fellow worked as I have, since the break of
day?

X.

Why, the lady said, this morning, when she watched me through
the blind,
I was welcome to a peck at every strawberry they've got;
He may net them, but I know a trick worth fifty of that kind—
Oh, his finger's on the trigger, and he wants to try a shot!
Silly birdie, cease your whistle, ere it end in wailing—
Golden beak, and eyes of jet, and sweet throat un-
availing!

Chuck, chuck, chuckle, chuck! fly away to the
shrubbery;
Soon I'll come, with better luck, and have another
strawberry.

R. D. BLACKMORE.

The Rustic of George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.

LITERATURE has had little to say of the labourer ; and this, not that his class is lacking in interest, in poetry, in romance, but simply because those sections of society to which writers belong know nothing about him. While the sharp distinctions once existing among the aristocracy, the gentry, the professional men, and the traders are melting away with ever-increasing rapidity, there is scarce any fusion of the labourer with the farmer and the artisan. What the former was two or three hundred years ago he now is, except for a few insignificant, and still fewer really important, aids which modern civilization has showered on other classes. The pressure of insufficient wages has forced some men away from the fields and into the ranker life of cities, where, as labourers still, tending the skilled artisan, they have unlearned much of their picturesque vocabulary, and added to it one coarse adjective, which does duty for all emphasis, expletive, and description. When these desire to communicate with their friends left behind in the fields, they have the cheap post, and some have a sufficient smattering of education to take advantage of it. So, too, when the shepherd will solace his lonely watches with tobacco, he has his quick lucifer-match instead of the slow flint and tinder-box ; his wife at home uses the vile paraffin instead of the innocuous, if somewhat dim, rushlight ; and kneads in some districts lumps of rhubarb, plant of recent introduction, into her home-baked loaf. The village shop, with its facilities for debt, and the need to the debtor of taking inferior goods, has cut out the travelling packman, and cheap machine-made wares have banished

the last weavers and knitters from the country villages ; the gathering of many parishes into Poor Law Unions has brought perforce into the labourer's mind some notion of a State larger than his own small community, some faint thought of a common weal. The railway whistle is heard far away in the hill hamlets by those who, even now, have never travelled by rail, and the cheap slop coat and trousers have almost ousted the picturesque smock-frock and leggings, which were the dress of the labourer from the days of Gurth and Wamba to those within the memory of us all.

But, in spite of these differences, the man himself is unchanged. Education has touched the outside, not leavened the life, of the villager. The Renaissance, the fervid and ignorant enthusiasm of the Primitive Methodist, the decorous services of the parish church, its restoration under modern ideas, have left his simple superstitions unmodified. The white witches, male or female, are still what they were in the days of the Wise Woman of Brentford ; curious shreds of plant and animal lore are treasured up in country nooks. The villages out of the immediate valley, or on the way to the nearest market town, are still as in a distant land, and a family settling in a new home are long regarded as strangers. Feuds between neighbour parishes are kept up by tongue, if not by actual strife, and customs which date from our prehistoric antiquity often regulate or influence social manners. The school does far less than is supposed. The proportion of crosses for signatures in parish registers away from towns is still very large, and Gray's invitation, "Approach and read, for thou *canst* read, the lay," has even now its point in many a country churchyard.

All those who can be named as labourers—ploughmen, hedgers and ditchers, carters, shepherds, woodmen—are a class apart ; it is rare indeed that any by marriage, by saving from their scanty pittance of wages, force themselves into that of the farmer or artisan, the latter being the carpenters, wheel-

wrights, blacksmiths, dairymen, of the village, in whose families the same trades are handed down almost as castes. If the labourer has no, or at best but short and simple, annals, it is not that his life has not its interest and pathos, but simply that the recorder is wanting. For the literary career touches it at scarce any point. The parson sees little of it; if he visit his parishioners he finds the wives only at home, and they, intent on household cares, are bored, if honoured, by his visit, which he feels to be somewhat perfunctory. The men are from home, engaged in their lonely field life, and the parson meets them only in sickness; a proper and natural instinct hinders his visits when the tired labourers are at home in the evening, while if they congregate in the taproom he would there be still more out of place. Only a few have attained to know the labourer as he is, and fewer still have written, or can write about him with truth and insight, yet without a false condescension.

First, in this as in all else that deals with human life, is Shakspeare. I believe all that the deerstealing tales imply. For deerstealing was the form of poaching open to the rustic population of Arden; no true labourer can ever be persuaded that any kind of poaching is morally wrong, while the young men of the classes somewhat higher are inclined to the same view till the instincts of the proprietor become more powerful than those of the sportsman. Shakspeare knew the very life of the people, as he could not have known it had he not at one time been of them, and had his heart not beaten to the same tunes as theirs. Hence the pictures of the country folk in "Winter's Tale" and "Cymbeline" for the more idyllic side; in "Love's Labour's Lost" and "As You Like It" for the more comic; hence the wit and pathos of many of his clowns and serving-men, drawn from the same stratum. The downright vulgar boors are the town artisans in "Midsummer Night's Dream," and the town constables in "Much Ado About Nothing." Nor would it be true to say that

Shakspeare has drawn these as he has drawn his Kings and Queens—that he knew Feste and Autolycus instinctively, as he knew Lear and Macbeth. His great personages are, as such truly are, merely the men among whom we live each day, but in finer clothes and invested with power; the moment they are moved with passion the robes and the pageant are nowhere, and the man is all. A hero drops at once and with ease to the level of manhood, we know how he would behave; it is far more easy to imagine an emperor than a rustic, supposing we have not seen either. And in the one case there is all the tradition and all the history of the past to aid, but there are no traditional portraits of the unknown men who form the basis of humanity. These, if drawn truly, must be drawn from life.

The one writer who, since Shakspeare, has come nearest the great master in the range of his characters is Sir Walter Scott. He, too, in his “raids” had come to live the life of the people, and understood them with loving sympathy; he, too, is equally great, whether he paints Mary of Scotland, or David Deans, or Edie Ochiltree the beggar, or Meg Merrilies the gipsy; but his ability is most conspicuous, and for the same reason, in the humbler folk.

The great majority of other authors have contented themselves, or rather have been restricted by their own limitations, to a sketch of individuals, cleverly done, indeed, but quite apart from any realization of the whole life. Thus, Fielding’s Molly is of course immortal, and stands for ever before us with her dung-fork raised on her shoulder in the light of that summer twilight in which Tom Jones encountered her while thinking on Sophia. So Charles Dickens’ rustic, who was sure Mr. Winkle stole the horse, is true; but neither of the great writers to whom we owe these, still less their inferiors, would have been able to give us a whole assemblage of such persons after the manner of a Dutch painter, or of our own Wilkie. There are, however, two writers of recent years, whose strength has chiefly

lain in touching Mother Earth ; who have felt, as Shakspeare felt, and as Scott felt, that human nature is the supremely interesting study for man, not the outward clothes in which it may be vested, nor the casual ceremonies in which it may be employed. These are, of course, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, two writers, if we can judge fairly of those of our own time, who seem to have produced works really to be called literature, destined to last as Fielding and Scott and Miss Austen have lasted, as Dickens and Thackeray will assuredly last ; while those who have amused an idle hour, though they have amused it much, as Trollope, or Mrs. Oliphant, will be forgotten with Mrs. Brunton and Mrs. Gore.

Both these writers fail at one point where Shakspeare and Scott succeed, when they attempt to give the life of the upper classes ; they are conspicuously admirable, each in his and her own phase of humbler life, George Eliot in describing the life of the farmer and the village artisan, Hardy that of the labourer, though the two classes are common to both. My subject here, however, is the contrast between their studies of the labourer. George Eliot's knowledge of this class has evidently sprung out of a feeling of keen sympathy, conjoined with close outward observation, for which she had quite exceptional advantages. Intimate personal contact is lacking, and this because, as has been observed before, the gulf, the caste separation, between the labourer and the farmer and artisan is far greater than between classes which are less likely to be confused were no arbitrary distinctions interposed. George Eliot's father, beginning life as the village artisan, rising into a land surveyor, and so taking his place among the superior farmers, eventually among the smaller gentry, stood outside and aloof from these people, whom his daughter knew because she had so profound sympathy with their lot, while she never had so much contact as the few persons who, from the standpoint of a position different from her own, have been able to live among the

labourers so as to see with their eyes and think their thoughts. What she sees, therefore, is the infinite pathos of their lot, and some of the outward characteristics, which would be less marked, if indeed they might not disappear, on a nearer view.

Thus, to take the description of the villagers in "Adam Bede," when gathering on the green, to hear the outdoor sermon of a woman :—

Every generation in the village was there, from old "Feyther Taft," in his brown worsted nightcap, who was bent nearly double, but seemed tough enough to keep on his legs a long while, leaning on his short stick, down to the babies. Now and then there was a new arrival, perhaps a slouching labourer, who, having eaten his supper, came out to look at the unusual scene with a slow bovine gaze, willing to hear what any one had to say in explanation of it, but by no means excited enough to ask a question. . . . Do not imagine them gathered in a knot. Villagers never swarm, a whisper is unknown among them, and they seem almost as incapable of an undertone as a cow or a stag. Your true rustic turns his back on his interlocutor, throwing a question over his shoulder, as if he meant to run away from the answer, and walking a step or two farther off when the interest of the dialogue culminates.

Again, in the same book, how beautifully and with what kindly human feeling she speaks of the labouring poor, and their proper place in Art, pictorial or literary ; of

old women scraping carrots with their work-worn hands, those heavy clowns taking holiday in a dingy pot-house, those rounded backs and stupid weather-beaten faces that have bent over the spade, and done the rough work of the world ; those homes with their tin pans, their brown pitchers, their rough curs, and their clusters of onions. . . . Let Art always remind us of them. . . . Let us always have men ready to give the loving pains of a life to the faithful representing of commonplace things, men who see beauty in these commonplace things, and delight in showing how kindly the light of Heaven falls on them.

Now, in such passages, and they might be indefinitely multiplied, there is a profound sympathy with what seemed to the writer a hard lot, but it is plainly studied from the outside nay, even more than that, she has in her mind certain definite genre pictures of the Dutch school, or of Landseer, and is applying them to the labourer, whose outward look she knew

so well, whose slowness of speech and scant vocabulary when in the presence, and talking of the affairs, of other classes than his own, she had noted with such infinite pity. If we go to "The Mill on the Floss" it is much the same; Luke, evidently a portrait from life, is difficult of speech in the presence of his young mistress, whose flights of fancy and more educated talk he is unable to follow. Glib speech among the lower class is reserved for the gipsies, men of alien race, and Bob Jakin, the town-bred pedlar of mixed race, with, it may be, a dash of the same gipsy blood. These, too, are probably portraits rather than specimens of a class.

Now, if we listen to those who really know the peasant, and know him as intimately as if they were sprung from his own ranks, we are told a different story. Mr. Barnes, for instance, the Dorset poet and philologist, remarks, in his interesting little book, "Speechcraft," that he heard with wonder the assertion made that the labourer has but two hundred words in his vocabulary. He thereupon began to reckon, and found that, at least in Dorset, that number was more than reached in simple nouns, or, as Mr. Barnes calls them, "thing names," for "things of the body and dress of a labourer," without quitting the man for his house or garden, or the field or his work. And we may depend upon it that the labourer would be even more astonished at our ignorance of words which were English before the Norman Conquest or even Christianity introduced Romance terms into the language, than we can be that he uses but few of those which express more complex mental processes, but are not always, therefore, more useful, and are certainly less picturesque.

The country life which George Eliot describes, with an accuracy which cannot be gainsaid or exceeded even by Shakspeare, is that of her own original class, the stratum of middle life whose lowest tier is the village artisan, the highest the town tradesman or merchant, ranging from Adam

Bede to Mr. Vincey. Within these limits the changes and interchanges of social rank are constant, there is no hard-and-fast line. Adam Bede might, as we know, have married Mary Burge, who is in the same social stratum as the Poysers and the Garths in "Middlemarch." The sense of misalliance is of the very slightest when Mary Garth is chosen by Fred Vincey, and so joins the families of the land-agent and the manufacturer. There is the same interalliance as occurs among the ranks of the gentry, in this country at least, where there is but scant trace of the great gulf which in Germany still exists between the *adel* and *nicht adel*. And just because George Eliot knew those people so well she is able to construct a true whole from slight indications, as the naturalist can build up the unseen animal from scantiest bone. She never sat in the sanded parlour of the Rainbow, nor rode with a horse-dealer to market, but we know instinctively that each minutest touch is photographically true, that she has not forgotten her own people and her father's house.

Mr. Hardy fails where George Eliot fails, in his portraiture of the fashionable world, and he does so more conspicuously; the exceptions in both cases occur when the writers are drawing portraits from obvious originals, or when they are describing the man or woman only, with no thought of the environment. His most absolute success is in the folk below George Eliot's, for he seizes from their own point of view the characteristics which she has seen from without. His rustic is not melancholy so long as he is in his own place and thinks his own thought. He is not oppressed with the pathos of his condition until, with Gabriel Oak, he has known higher things, or until, with Clym Yeobright, there mixes in his blood some gentler strain, and he gains a culture from abroad. And neither of these is a peasant pure and simple. It cannot be said of his peasants: "O fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint," but rather that they are happy, and count themselves so, because they know what is

good in their own lot, while their imaginations have not as yet grasped the thought that the strata of society are conventionally ordered, are capable of shifting, not arranged necessarily in the eternal purposes of the world. And while George Eliot's rustics always behave as though the upper classes were studying them, and they were posing for their pictures, Mr. Hardy's are the natural men and women free from all trammels, showing themselves as they do to each other. Because most people fail to see the labourer thus, they consider Mr. Hardy's novels are untrue to Nature; they might as well say that the Arabian Nights are faithless to Eastern life, because all that they describe is not at once apparent to the European who lands at Alexandria, or goes with a dragoman to Damascus.

We have seen a gathering of rustics for a serious purpose in "Adam Bede;" here is another, on the more lightsome occasion of a village bonfire, in "The Return of the Native." Grandfer Cante is the comrade in age of Grandfeyther Taft.

The face of an old man, who, like others, had been called to the heights by the rising flames, was not merely the nose and chin which it appeared to be, but an appreciable quantity of human countenance. He stood complacently sunning himself in the heat. . . . The beaming light and the penetrative warmth seemed to breed in him a cumulative cheerfulness, which soon amounted to delight. With his stick in his hand he began to jig a private minuet, a bunch of copper seals shining and swinging like a pendulum from under his waistcoat: he also began to sing in the voice of a bee up a flue. . . . Want of breath prevented the continuance of the song; and the breakdown attracted the attention of a firm-standing man of middle age, who kept each corner of his crescent-shaped mouth rigorously drawn back into his cheek, as if to do away with any suspicion of mirthfulness which might have erroneously attached to him.

"A fair stave, Grandfer Cante, but I'm afeard 'tis too much for the mouldy weasand of such a old man as you," he said to the wrinkled reveller. "Dostn't wish th' wast three sixes again, Grandfer, as you was when you first learnt to sing it?" "Hey?" said Grandfer Cante, stopping in his dance. "Dostn't wish wast young again, I say. There's'a hole in thy poor bellows nowadays, seemingly. But there's good art in me. If I couldn't make a little wind go a long way I should seem no younger than the most aged man, should I, Timothy?" . . . "I met Miss'es Yeobright last night, and she told me that her son was coming home a Christmas. Wonderful clever 'a b'lieve

—ah, I should like to have all that's under that young man's hair. Well, then I spoke to her in my well-known merry way, and she said, 'O that what's shaped so venerable should talk like a fool!'—that's what she said to me. I don't care for her, be jowned if I do, and so I told her. 'Be jowned if I care for 'ee,' I said. I had her there, hey?"

Not that all village patriarchs are like this irreverent old man, but the whole conversation, of which the above is a trifling sample, shows a wholly different view of the labourer from that taken by the great novelist of the middle class. It would be obviously out of place in an article like the present to quote at length, but let any one take the scanty passages in which George Eliot speaks of the labourer, and they will be found always in the same pathetic minor key, while Hardy has as many tones as are in the gamut of humanity in his description of the same class. The whole bonfire scene, the hair-cutting on Egdon, and the mummers in "The Return of the Native," the group in the vault in "A Pair of Blue Eyes," the smugglers in "The Distracted Young Preacher," and the village choir in "Under the Greenwood Tree," are specimens among many more of pictures of the labourer as he is, unmatched in literature.

But George Eliot and Thomas Hardy agree about the attitude towards religion of the pure unmixed rustic. In Hay-slope Church "none of the old people held books—why should they? Not one of them could read. But they knew a few 'good words' by heart, and their withered lips now and then moved silently, following the service, without any clear comprehension indeed, but with a simple faith in its efficacy to ward off harm and to bring blessing." And at Raveloe "the inhabitants were not severely regular in their church-going, and perhaps there was hardly a person in the parish who would not have held that to go to church every Sunday in the calendar would have shown a greedy desire to stand well with heaven, and get an undue advantage over their neighbours—a wish to be better than the common run, that would have

implied a reflection on those who had godfathers and godmothers as well as themselves, and had an equal right to the burying service."

So in the "The Return of the Native" the Egdon folk, and, indeed, the inhabitants of all such outlandish hamlets, are pagan still in their impulses. "'Tis a very strange thing that whenever one of Egdon folk goes to church some rum job or other is sure to go on." Now it is a charm against witchcraft, worked by running a needle into the supposed witch, by the woman who sits next her; now it is something else, wholly disconnected with the service of the day, which goes on as a kind of charm, apart from the volition of those attending the rite. Through all Mr. Hardy's books, though the parson is mentioned as a component part of village life, and in two at least he plays no inconsiderable part, the doctrines he preaches have simply no effect on his people, who have remained unchanged by religion, heeding special doctrines little, yet holding much to symbols and charms and superstitions of hoar antiquity.

Yet, unchanging as appears the labourer, he too yields at last to the advances of time, and it is a peculiarity of these later days that change once begun proceeds with great rapidity. George Eliot shows a consciousness of this in that she has for the most part chosen the time of her stories before railroads, before the Reform Bill, before the Oxford Tracts, and the other indications of a new era. But change is long only outward; society in all ranks is like a snake which sloughs its skin; the organic alterations which modify the whole structure are slow, if, as evolutionists assert, they are sure. Now, when this organic change begins to be perceptible in the English labourer; when the train and the Board school, both advancing into country districts, strip him of his old idyllic charm and shrewd natural lore, replacing the learning which is gained from intercourse with Nature by that slowly learned from books; when his pagan superstitions, persistent as they are, have passed away

as completely as the nymphs of the forest and stream, which once were as real as witchcraft and charms are now ; when the lightsome merriment, born of ignorance, described so well by Hardy, has given place to that consciousness of a stern lot, which but recently was felt for him by George Eliot, though not by himself,—what are the elements which shall lend comfort to his spirit and give him back the poetry which vanishes with his pagan beliefs ? Mr. Hardy does not hint it ; his business is simply to gather up the fragments that remain, and show us the romance and idyll of country life. George Eliot puts before us in a sterner, stronger strain, the impulses of duty, the loveliness of human love, the future grandeur of the race, based on the unseen work of the individual, as the coral insect builds the fair Pacific isle. Yet, surely such a creed as hers cannot suffice for the toiling millions, who demand something for themselves to balance against their pains, some beauty to weigh against what is hard and grimy in their lot. The State religious teachers have failed conspicuously, as Mr. Hardy, perhaps unconsciously, demonstrates. Can those whom they have ousted come to the country peasant once more, and, incorporating his beliefs into theirs, raise and purify them, so as to preserve the poetry and sweeten the sorrows of his life of toil ?

C. KEGAN PAUL.

Miss Martha's Bag:

AN OLD MAID'S WHIM.

NO one had ever seen Miss Martha without her bag. It was a notable bag—a sentimental bag—with a heart embroidered upon it, a wreath of forget-me-nots, and on one side a branch of laurel. It was always strapped and fastened with stout clasps. No one had ever seen these clasps unclosed. If the bag looked sentimental, Miss Martha's appearance did not suggest sentiment. She was simply a stout, blooming-checked elderly lady, whose manner was occasionally ridiculously youthful, and who wore a costume of antiquated fashion. A more observant scrutiny resulted in a pleasanter impression, yet it left on the mind a baffling one, concerning Miss Martha's age and idiosyncrasy. If we might thus express it, youth and age kept a separate and ruling influence over her countenance. The eyes had lost their charm of setting in the wrinkled skin; they had not lost their brilliancy, their alertness of glance. The outlines of the features were blurred, but the piquancy of mobile expression was in them still; and if the lips were a little blue, they retained the sweetness of quickly-coming smiles. She still kept up the young habit of blushing, and if some of the colour had faded out of her brown hair, it had not lost its pretty silkiness of texture. Perhaps it was the impartial rotundity of her figure that precluded sentiment from being associated with Miss Martha. She rigidly adhered through all the changes of fashion to her own taste in dress. In the days of crinoline and trailing draperies she wore a short skirt edged with a single flounce, displaying sandal shoes; a fichu was pinned over her bust; and a little bit of pink was always introduced.

The old lady earned a livelihood in Paris by teaching English. Her principal means of sustenance came from the salary she received for lessons given at the Convent School of Notre Dame. She lived in the Rue Ste. Croix, in a little attic, *au septième* of a house situated a few yards distant from the convent. It was a steep and quiet street, about which lingered an aroma of sanctity—a street that seemed to have lagged behind from the Middle Ages. Statuettes of the Virgin looked down from many a niche, clad in white, fresh flowers laid at her feet. Over the door of a number of the antique houses, on either side, rose the massive cross. It was a street of convents, of schools, of hospitals. Down its rugged *pavés* walked piety and charity, hand in hand, sweetest union divesting monasticism of all its sternness.

No one knew anything about Miss Martha's previous history ; her full name was Miss Martha Langton, but every one called her Miss Martha. She had been recommended to the nuns by a priest as one deserving of help, and in need of it. In the *quartier* there was a general impression that the *vieille fille anglaise* was a bit daft, but it was a gentle daftness that won a mingling of pity in the regard bestowed upon her. If her ways were eccentric, they were lovable. She had kept a freshness about her. She was fond of walking in the Bois de Boulogne. On returning she would enumerate, in her shrill crescendo voice, the items that had charmed her in her walk ; the good air that had blown on her cheeks ; the notes of the birds she had heard, what they had said to her ; the wild flowers she had seen ; she knew the language of flowers, and told little parables in it.

Her relations with the neighbours were marked with *bonhomie*, superficial yet genial. She gave a ready ear to their troubles, and helped them in their difficulties out of her hardly won earnings. In the love affairs of the young she took an especial interest, blushing and dimpling, and wagging her big

bonnet with arch pleasantry as she listened to their story. Miss Martha would march off to the *Bon Marché* and buy a little bit of finery for the future bride. "When one is loved, one must look pretty," the old maid would say. For all this kindness it was felt, nevertheless, that the griefs and joys of others affected Miss Martha but remotely. She was at heart a solitary, meeting other human beings on the most superficial points of contact. She spoke with them, but she repelled all advances at intimacy. She invited no one to cross the threshold of her little room, and accepted none of the invitations tendered to her. To press her upon this point was to ruffle her serene temper. "But no, but no," she would answer, her voice rising in restless crescendo. "Leave me to myself. I am quite happy alone. I like best my solitude." Another peculiarity of Miss Martha's was her attitude concerning her bag. She repelled with chill curtness any remark concerning its appearance, its odd shape, the embroidery upon it. If the prim formality of her manner when the subject was broached was amusing, if it did not succeed in keeping inquiry at arm's-length, she would break into a fit of pathetic and childlike anger. "It was impertinent to notice her bag. It concerned no one. Leave it alone." Another peculiarity of Miss Martha's was reported by those who met her on her walks. They said that she did not seem to see them; that as she walked she talked to herself; and that often her face would be lit by a broad smile. If that smile gave no comfort to others, it seemed to tell of a mighty comfort in the old maid's heart.

Miss Martha's pupils at the Convent of Notre Dame had many theories concerning the contents of her bag. Probably, if the nuns thought about it, they imagined it was a receptacle like the pocket of a *religieuse*, a world of miscellaneous objects, all pious and useful. The girls' conjectures were manifold. A few of dull imagination maintained it held light refreshments. The opinion that Miss Martha's soft brown hair was a front, and

that the bag held a change of wigs, found some adherents. There were some who maintained that the bag held nothing at all; it was worn "pour se donner une contenance." Nothing in it was ever heard to shake or rattle; but the favourite idea was that it contained all Miss Martha's fortune—all her heirlooms. This notion gained ground the day when Miss Martha appeared violently agitated and, for the first and only time, alluded to her bag of her own accord. She explained that a seedy-looking man had made a clutch at it. She gave a vivid rehearsal of the scene, the tenacity and passion with which she had clung to it, and defeated the robber's purpose. To her pupils' eager question, had she given him up to the police?—"No," she replied, "I did not care to do that; I had the bag."

By the time Miss Martha had taught ten years at the Convent of Notre Dame, and her bag had become accepted as a part of herself—as we grow to accept a friend's wooden leg or wig, and to respectfully invest it with a share of his individuality—a new pupil arrived. The nuns had not harboured Mademoiselle Reine Michemin a fortnight when they knew they had admitted a "demon" in the fold. Their keys were mislaid; the fruit-trees were rifled; large inroads were daily made into Sœur Monique's weekly batches of pastry. Before three weeks the *espiègeries* of Mademoiselle Michemin [had filled the place. Its peace had gone out of the window as she had entered its door.

Among her erratic store of accomplishments she had mastered, during her travels with her father, a fair knowledge of English, and she was sufficiently advanced at once to take the second place in Miss Martha's class. Speculations concerning the bag furnished food for her brain; she scouted all the old theories respecting it. She advanced a new, a fascinating, a startling one. There were neither wig nor heirlooms in that bag; it contained neither sandwiches nor light refreshments; it was not empty. The bag contained Miss Martha's love-

letters. "*Tout un roman inédit* was in that bag," she said. Then encouraged by the effect she produced, she piled conjectures. "Bah! who knows; there may be in it the embalmed heart of a lover—such things have been!"

Mdlle. Reine, at sixteen years of age, wielded an influence over her fellow-pupils. Her fearlessness, a sense of grotesque humour that flavoured her nature and gave a sort of coarse health to it, impressed them. She swayed their ideas backwards and forwards, according to her will. Having advanced the theory that Miss Martha's bag contained "*tout un roman inédit*," she stuck to it, and enlarged upon it, and they followed the pitiless vivacity of her fancy through all its vagaries. That Miss Martha's rotund face should have once inspired an ardent passion, set them drawing caricatures, composing *bouts-rimés*, writing farcical love-letters in their leisure moments. One girl only, Aline de Raix—the eldest of the class—kept aloof, and stood between the old maid and her would-be tormentors. She it was who one day intercepted a caricature, inserted in the grammar laid upon Miss Martha's desk, where a portly lady in a ridiculously old-fashioned dress was represented firmly grasping the bag, to the handle of which were chained a number of cupids, who gazed upon the expansive figure with laughter and amazement, or turned away affrighted and in tears. Aline took out the drawing, and looking full at Reine, said quietly: "I shall lay this before the Mère Supérieure." "It will bring matters to an amusing pass," answered Reine with a laugh. "I would give something to see our good mother's face when the bag is disembowelled and its contents laid before her. I fancy Miss Martha would sooner suffer all the torments we can devise than go through that ordeal."

A little quiver of the eyelids showed that Aline appreciated the force of the "demon's" reasoning. "You may be right," she said, after a pause, folding the drawing and putting it into her pocket; "but I shall risk the consequences if anything like

this happens again. Ah, mesdemoiselles," she continued, turning to the others, and speaking in the husky tone that came into her voice when she was moved, "you are doing an ugly thing, turning into ridicule an old lady. Suppose it is! suppose they are!" She faltered, then resumed abruptly, "Suppose the bag contains what Reine says it does! Suppose it is the buried story of Miss Martha's life that is in it. Is it not beautiful to be so faithful to a memory?" Again Aline lapsed into silence a moment, looking straight before her; then she continued, "Ah! how she has suffered. It is her heart she carries swung over her arm." She paused suddenly; she had caught the converging gaze of a dozen pairs of eyes, fixed with *naïf* astonishment upon her. A scarlet blush flitted to her brow, and she sat down hurriedly.

Reine burst out laughing; but the laugh was checked by the door opening, and the girls rising to their feet, as Miss Martha entered, introduced as usual into the class-room by one of the sisters.

It was remarked by her comrades that Aline blundered absurdly over the lesson; but it would have required finer powers of observation than they possessed to have noticed that once, when Miss Martha laid her hand upon the young girl's shoulder, reproving her for being so *distracte*, and the bag grazed her arm, Aline grew pale to the lips, and recoiled as if she had received a physical hurt.

THE BAG'S SECRET.

The fête of the Mère Supérieure was a gala day at the Convent, yearly celebrated with social and religious *éclat*. For weeks beforehand, nuns and pupils were busy working offerings to present to their Mother, and watching with special interest the progress of the flowers in the garden.

It fell on a day set in the heart of June ; the sisters nevertheless considered it a special sign of Heaven's grace upon it that it constantly proved so fair. This year the day rose, as usual, resplendent in a garment of sunshine and a girdle of leaves, and the nuns again said this to each other as they gathered the blossoms in the cool of the morning.

Visitors from the outside world were invited to join the festivities ; refreshments were laid in the refectory ; the afternoon was to be spent in the garden. It was the only anniversary upon which Miss Martha relaxed her *farouche* habit of keeping away from her kind on their holiday occasions. Her broad figure usually appeared one of the first at the Convent gate, bag on arm, the clasps finely burnished ; she always wore a dove-coloured silk gown of skimpy proportions, displaying the bravery of her best sandal shoes and open-worked stockings, and sported a red Indian scarf, strongly smelling of *pot pourri*. Her big bonnet had new strings, and a fresh rose-coloured ribbon fluttered at her throat. Miss Martha always brought a bouquet to the Mère Supérieure, the arrangement of which she had supervised at the *Marché aux fleurs*.

It was afternoon now ; the shadows were lengthening in the orchard where Aline sat with a group of sisters. There was a stir of scampering feet and sound of cries all round. She had just risen to go indoors to fetch her tapestry, when she noticed a number of girls making for the Convent. She thought she discerned Reine waving her handkerchief, as if giving a signal. The circumstance did not dwell on her mind. It was doubtless one of a variety of games. She leisurely walked up a slightly ascending path on the summit of which stood a bower. It was a charming retreat. Under the interweaving branches of creepers a bench was placed from which could be seen the square towers of Notre Dame, the nearer tower of St. Sulpice. As she approached, she caught a glimpse of a dove-coloured dress. "I shall surprise some one asleep on that bench," smiled

Aline. The sleeper, she found, was Miss Martha. The old lady's head was thrown back, her bonnet had slipped off, holding by its strings to her wrinkled throat. As she lay in the *abandon* of sleep, all the sword-strokes, all the scars that the years deal in their passage, came out plainly visible. Awake, she had a mobility of expression, a brightness of the eyes, which kept up an appearance of youth ; but in sleep, age had its revenge. If the clock of the old maid's life had stopped some forty years ago striking to the throb of emotion, it had gone on recording the passage of time, and showed the hour in the surrender of lassitude. Aline marked the wrinkles, the sunken temples, the reddened eyelids, the weak droop of the opened mouth through which came the heavy breath. All the dust of life gathered on the thinning hair. She was touched. She thought there was a valiant calm upon the old face. As she stood a moment there, wishing she could place a pillow under Miss Martha's head, something struck her as missing in her appearance. She could not think what it was : then it flashed upon her—it was the bag ! The bag was gone. Quickly she looked about for it on every side. It was nowhere. Then she remembered that swarm of girls disappearing within the Convent.

She set off with a run. Her bounding young feet carried her soon over the garden, into the house ; past the *parloir*, where the chairs, disturbed from their formal array, stood about in sociable groups ; up the stairs into the dormitories, the nuns' cells, the rooms of the *Sœurs Converses*—no sign of the pilferers anywhere ; all was still as the sunshine pouring in. As she stood pondering where she would go next, a muffled sound of laughter struck her ear, then a peal quickly smothered. There was a garret—a remote attic—from the window of which a glimpse of the Rue Ste. Croix could be obtained. Quick as thought she was on its threshold. The rusty key did not turn in the lock, but a chair barricaded the door. Aline pushed it back with violence.

"*Ah, mon Dieu !*" exclaimed some startled voices. Then a laugh of recognition.

"*Entrez donc*, but don't make a noise ; for all the world we must not be found out. Miss Martha, you see, she does not know this attic," cried Reine. She was the central figure of a group of girls kneeling or squatting on the floor.

Aline recognized the bag in her lap ; she confusedly saw the floor around her strewn with letters and a variety of objects. "Ah, but it is infamous—it is infamous what you are doing !" she cried.

"Not a bit of it," replied Reine, unabashed, talking rapidly. "Before hiding the bag, we are only examining its contents. It is just what I said—*tout un roman inédit*, inside it. Don't look so miserable. We only want to give the old maid a start ; we'll help her to find it—her dear bag—after she has had a good look for it."

"I tell you that it is odious—that it is like sacrilege," Aline answered, with laboured breath.

"Bah ! Don't let her get out. Marie, stand before the door. Keep her hands from her ears. She must listen ! You will see how interesting it is. Miss Martha's lover is a soldier—an officer—handsome fellow—blonde moustache—little air of pride—quite *un militaire*. There is his miniature ! *Malbrook s'en va-t-en guerre*. Ah ! you must hear ; he languishes—he burns—he bursts with love—for Miss Martha."

"Ah !" grieved Aline, whom two laughing girls were holding back, "you don't know—you don't know—what you are doing !"

"There are all sorts of things in the bag !" continued Reine, in an explanatory voice ; "a cockade—a medal—a soiled gauntlet—quite a museum of romantic old clothes—a gold thimble—a pearl ring—some faded flowers—everything ; and little compartments sewn into the lining for everything. That is why nothing rattled. Now listen : Malbrook is gone on a

visit—first parting—great despair—egoism of love—Miss Martha has bidden him not be too happy without her.”

In a French accent, slowly, Reine began to read :—

Happy away from you ! I am as stupidly miserable as ever a poor love-sick boy was—and you know it. My heart is away waiting before that shabby green garden door—watching to see it open and let you out. I see the damp steps leading down to the river, and you coming tripping along on your pretty feet. As I used to watch you—your trim waist ; your dainty ankles ; your cheeks blooming like roses ; your eyes all alight with mischief and fun—I used to say : “There’s a nymph for you. Such a girl the poets saw when they wrote about the nymphs.”

“Miss Martha a nymph !”

“A nymph !” went eddying round Aline on smothered screams of laughter.

But what I see oftenest (continued Reine, not heeding the interruption), is the hedge of lavender—that blessed hedge in the garden—and that morning when you on one side, and I on the other, we picked the flowers for Aunt Priscilla’s *pot pourri*. My dear, you had used me shamefully. I had no spirit for anything ; my cigar had lost its comforting power ; my heart had been on the chill pavement twenty times a day ; but all at once—do you remember?—our hands met across the hedge, and I would not let yours go—I would not—until you had promised they would rest in mine in that clasp death only can part. You might laugh, as much as you liked, after you had promised, and say you’d marry me some 30th of February or on All Fools’ Day. I did not care ; I could laugh too. I knew I was the luckiest fellow in the world. Bless you for it !

“Amen !” said the auditors.

You ask how I like the miniature (Reine began again from another letter). Passably only. There is a sort of resemblance ; but what enrages me is that I fancy I detect on the painter’s part a ruffianly intention to beautify you. He has tried to set right, what he may facetiously call “out of drawing,” in your face. He has not given that gentle squeeze up of the left side that makes one eye, one eyebrow, and especially one nostril, a little higher than the other. That delightful awry look, so perplexing and tormenting. Of course he has not done justice to your eyes ; I did not expect *that*—those sparkling, wicked, charming eyes. The colour of the hair is just so so, as it looks in the shade, and braided up tight, according to Aunt Priscilla’s notions of Sunday propriety. Loose and in the sunlight, what is that hair like ? I think of amber, champagne, a nimbus ! That is your hair.

The explosion of laughter that followed this string of similes,

no longer jarred upon Aline. She was absorbed ; she did not hear it ; she no longer stirred ; she no longer protested. She stood listening to words that, blundering and foolish, yet sounded notes of the eternal love-song which all creation utters, and which every woman's heart longs to hear addressed to itself.

Presently she heard Reine say : " His last letter—that is inscribed in Miss Martha's *pattes de mouche*."

Brussels, June 16, 1815.

I can only snatch one moment — one moment to say farewell to my dearest Martha ; the bugles are sounding ; the drums are beating ; our fellows are mustering in the " Place." It is a gallant sight. In half an hour we march. Prayers and tears for us are flowing from many homes ; my dear girl's are amongst them, I know. Her miniature is on my heart ; her smile and blush are there painted before me. If a French bullet finds me out, my last thought will be of her. The signal is called. Good-by, my dear. God bless you. God bless you, my sweetheart !

A silence followed this letter. Reine said, more slowly than she had yet spoken : " There is something inside, wrapped in tissue-paper ; let us see what Miss Martha has written. ' My miniature smashed by the bullet that went through his true heart ! ' Good," she resumed briskly. " Now we are going to see Miss Martha at nineteen years of age ! " She began carefully to unfold the paper ; then she said quickly : " Ah ! no, we cannot ; it is all in bits—a heap of little bits ; nothing, absolutely nothing. There are brown stains," she laughed nervously, " the stains of blood — *le sang de Malbrook*. Ah ! How horrid ! " With a hysterical sob she threw the fragments and paper down on the floor. A thrill ran through the attic.

All at once the chair before the door fell with a crash. Miss Martha stood on the threshold, panting, dishevelled, terrible. Some nuns stood behind her, stirred out of their calm.

With the gesture of a mad woman and a cry, the old maid sprang towards Reine ; but this young lady eluded her by jumping to her feet, and letting the bag fall on the ground.

Then Miss Martha went down on her knees, and dragging

herself on all-fours, began to pick up the spilt fragments of the miniature, the tokens and the letters,—uttering little inarticulate cries like the moans of a wounded animal. For a short space there was a silence as the girls watched this revelation of grief and love. Then Aline stooped with the intention of helping Miss Martha, and some girls followed her example; but, with a cry of fury, the old maid shook her head and uplifted forefinger, to stop any further desecration of those treasures.

At that moment the voice of the *Mère Supérieure* was heard bidding the girls leave the room, and wait for her in the school-room—all but Aline, whose entreaty to stay was granted, and who explained to the Mother what had happened.

Meanwhile, Miss Martha continued to pick up those profaned relics, uttering those inarticulate cries; Aline and the Mother watching in silence. When the poor soul had gathered the last letter, fastened the last parcel with the faded ribbon, and put each in its place, the *Mère Supérieure* approached her, where she sat on the floor foolishly nursing the bag. The Mother spoke kindly. She said she grieved at the pain so recklessly inflicted. It had been done thoughtlessly, she was sure. She gently reproached Miss Martha for having hugged this grief—borne it alone. Ah! why had she not laid it at the feet of the Mother of Sorrows, who would have known how to comfort her? At this, Miss Martha muttered something incoherently, accompanied by a violent repudiating gesture of her head. The *Mère* resumed gently: “You have nothing to reproach yourself, Miss Martha. I have nothing but praise to give you. And yet, I hope you will understand me, after this unfortunate affair my duty to those young girls confided to my care—to the sisters, will oblige me for a time—only for a time—to ask you to suspend your attendance at the class.”

“Oh! my Mother,” broke in Aline, with fervour; “do not say that. Ah! she has kept her secret so well! She has

borne her sorrow so alone! No one would have known it from her! Never a word—never a look, to betray it.”

“Hush! Aline,” said the Mère, lifting her hand. “You understand me, Miss Martha, I am sure.”

“Yes, yes, I understand,” replied Miss Martha, stupidly.

“After the holidays,” resumed the Mère gently, “we shall be glad to welcome you again. Reine will be gone then. She must leave at once. The matter will have dropped by that time. Then you will come. There is one thing only I must ask. You must not bring the bag; you must leave it behind.”

Miss Martha had listened, dully acquiescent, till the last phrase; then she rose to her feet. “Leave it behind! Never! never for a moment!” she said, with concentration. “Where I go, it goes with me.” She looked down, and began caressing the faded embroidery with the tips of her fingers. “Ah! what does it signify if I earn less? Very little suffices me. To each, what each wants upon earth. To some, plenty; to you, abstinence, good deeds, and prayers; to me, the thought of him and how he loved me.—Why,” she continued in an energetic tone of reproach, “should you wish to part me from the perpetual assurance of his love? You wear the token of your dedication; you have your veil and your chaplet; the married woman has her wedding ring; well, I—I have my bag—and I will not part with it, no more than you would put aside your habit, to gain some paltry advantage.”

She walked towards the door; the nun followed, still gently remonstrating. Aline remained, immovable, near the window. Presently she heard the gate of the convent close. She looked down and saw Miss Martha below in the rugged street. She was walking rapidly, her bag over her arm. It was, indeed, her heart that was swung there.

Aline watched her till she could see her no more; then she let her face fall on her hands, and she began to sob. She

could not have told for whom she was crying—for Miss Martha, or for herself.

WHAT THE BAG SAID TO ALINE.

A fortnight had elapsed ; the low sunlight cast gigantic shadows of crosses over the Rue Ste. Croix. A knock came to Miss Martha's door. It was repeated when no answer came, and then the voice of the old maid cried querulously, "Who is there ? What do you want ?" After a while the door opened, and Aline and Miss Martha stood face to face. It was the first time they had met since that bag had been rifled by profane hands.

Aline saw that the old maid looked altered ; her health and strength had visibly declined. If the freshness and sparkle of her expression had faded, there was yet upon it, perceptible through the disturbance caused by an unwelcome visit, the serenity that comes from intercourse with the dead.

She glanced askance at Aline, and did not invite her to enter. "I should like to speak to you, Miss Martha," said the young girl, timidly. "There is no hurry, I can wait here until you are ready to receive me. The concierge promised to return to take me back to the convent." "I did not want to see any of my convent pupils again. They have made me suffer too much," Miss Martha said, with explosion. She turned away, but she did not shut the door, and Aline accepting this as a negative invitation, made a step or two into the room. She saw that it had once been a pretty apartment, draped with the coquetry of white curtains and pink ribbon ; it looked to-day as if the owner had grown weary at the task of arranging it, and had allowed the dust to accumulate, and the hangings to drag. Miss Martha's bag was on the table, its contents taken out ; evidently Aline had disturbed the old maid in the midst of her memories. With feverish haste Miss Martha began to

put back her treasures, speaking aloud in curt detached sentences, vehemently, as one accustomed to speak to herself.

"They jeered at his words—his sacred words. Monkeys, chattering and grinning at a martyrdom. The good mother says, 'Lay your sorrow at the feet of the Virgin.' I will lay it nowhere; I will keep it where it is—in my heart. Yes, in my heart. It is my possession; I have cared for nothing else all those years. I have envied nobody else's joy, because I had it. I would not have exchanged it—my sorrow—for any one's happiness. I say to myself, I, the old, grotesque, poor woman, I had his love; and when we meet again, he will know I thought of him to the end, as he thought of me."

Then suddenly looking up at Aline, and addressing her: "If you have come like the others—like the Mère and the sisters, to ask me to part with my bag, and come back to teach, you may go. It is no use; I will not part with it—there. I will not—no, not for a day—not for an hour—not for a moment."

"I have not come for that," said Aline, approaching the old maid, who had sat down after saying the last words. The girl knelt by the chair, a velvety look was in her eyes. She spoke ardently in a concise voice, "I have come to ask you to accompany me into the country—to be with me in my grandfather's chateau. We shall be so well there."

An expression on the old maid's face seemed to say she would not go. She was well here, in this room, where she had spent so many years with her Past.

"I am going there for a while." Aline's voice trembled and fell away; a blush arose. She resumed quickly: "You will see how well we shall be at the chateau; it stands in the midst of woods; you will be able to take those long country walks you like to take, and pick the wild flowers. And the bag? Oh! yes, the bag is to come with us. I want it also!"

"You want it?" said Miss Martha suspiciously, with lowered brows.

"Yes," replied Aline, in that husky tone of emotion ; "if it has said so much to you, it has said something to me—something that may alter all my life."

"Your life?" said Miss Martha, surprised, almost jealous.

"Yes," repeated Aline, hesitating, yet resolved to speak. "You see I had to listen when Reine read those letters. It was as if something held me there ; and when you left, and every one was gone, still there was, as it were, a voice speaking to me. I tried to shut my ears to it, for I said to myself it may be an evil spirit—one of temptation. I went to the chapel¹ and prayed, and prayed ; still it was there talking to me—the voice of the young man killed. It was as if I had laid my hand upon his heart and felt its throbs, and he had come to be my friend. He was always by me—in the convent, in church, in the garden. I thought sometimes I heard his step keeping pace with mine as I went up and down the convent stairs. I almost thought I saw him, his brave young face looking at me as he pleaded for—for, it seemed to me—a comrade. Ah! we used to argue together, to fall out, to be reconciled. He would say : 'How do you know that it is not to that one who told you his love, that you are sent? One heart comforted may be asked of you—one life made a little happier, a little nobler, for your influence over it.' Ah! Miss Martha, I have prayed, and prayed, to know if it was my own poor heart that spoke to me, if it was an evil spirit or a true one who haunted me. I don't know yet. I don't know. But I told it all to the Mère Supérieure, and to my Confessor. They advised me to leave the school for a while—to go into the world, to test my heart there. And so I said to myself, I shall go to Miss Martha—to the woman this dead friend loved. I shall ask her to come with me—to come into the country. We shall all three go together—all three."

Aline ended abruptly, with a little laugh that had tears in it.

The old maid had listened, sitting bolt upright, amazement depicted on her countenance. She had at first interrupted with such exclamations as : "He said that to you?" "He said that!" But towards the close of Aline's speech she remained rigidly silent. When the young girl stopped, she looked straight at her, and as she looked a beam touched the old face, and woke a new expression upon it. It seemed as if all of a sudden the discord between the expression and the years upon it had melted away. She laid her hands upon Aline's shoulders, and smiled. It was the mother's smile, fine and full of guesses—the smile that knows more about the story than the teller does. "Poor little Aline! poor little Aline!" she repeated. Reaching out her arms, Miss Martha took the girl to her heart. It had been empty so long of sympathy with the living, that she could not speak awhile for the stir of re-awakened emotions. Then she said : "Yes, yes—we shall go with you. We shall all three go away together, my child."

ALICE CORKRAN.

A Plea for Guilds of Health.

FOR many years my father, the late Sir Henry Cole, had paid attention to the possible solution of difficulties in connection with social questions. A succession of Conferences upon National Health, Water Supply, &c., were held in London between the years 1876 and 1880. They helped to concentrate various forces which were working more or less for the same end. The Society of Arts, with whose welfare in earlier years my father had identified himself, energetically organized these conferences and crystallized the results of them for public advantage. As far as it went, the work was pre-eminently successful. Men, distinguished for their interest in social problems, for their acquaintance with the operation of Acts of Parliament and bye-laws of Local Boards, for their knowledge of the technical and scientific aspects of methods and incidents of national sanitation, all took part in these conferences. Representatives from many of the great manufacturing and trading towns of England: Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Nottingham, Oldham, Warrington, Rochdale, Dudley; from sea-ports and agricultural towns: Devonport, Southampton, Hastings, Bridport, Colchester, Winchester, Honiton, Horsham, Oxford, Croydon, Rochester, Kenilworth and elsewhere, were present. The speeches made at these conferences, the papers read, the evidence collected and the resolutions passed, were printed by the Society of Arts, and fill a large octavo volume of over seven hundred pages of small type.

The publication of all this information is a most valuable work to have performed, and for some time to come the record of the Society of Arts Conferences on Health will no doubt serve as a standard work of reference in respect of the latest

opinions of the highest authorities upon National Health in its various ramifications. At the first conference, which was held in May, 1876, "Health and the Sewage of Towns" was the subject for consideration. The Right Hon. James Stansfeld, M.P., a former President of the Local Government Board, presided. The executive committee, to promote the success of the conference, had obtained returns from upwards of 106 towns in the United Kingdom, showing the manner in which sewage is dealt with in each locality, the cost, and other particulars, as far as they could be procured; and for purposes of comparison, the population and death-rate were given. Papers on the systems of treating sewage, the obstacles to working some of these systems, the pollution of rivers, and accounts of systems in use abroad, came before those attending the conference, and were discussed. Shortly afterwards, a report was issued in which the chairman and executive committee submitted the conclusions to which the facts brought forward had helped to lead them. As a means of enlivening public interest, it was suggested that all parts of the kingdom should frame petitions, and headings were sketched out for adoption in these petitions, which should be directed, in the first place, towards obtaining amendments in the laws relating to Public Health. The three principal headings thus sketched out were (1) That all house drains connected with public sewers in the metropolis, and towns having an urban authority, should be placed under the inspection and control of local sanitary inspectors, who should be bound to see to the effective construction and due maintenance of house drains, pipes, and connections; (2) That plans of such drains and connections should be deposited in the charge of the local authorities, who should be bound to exhibit them and supply copies of them to the public on payment of a moderate fee; and (3) That the owners of houses should be compelled by law to send to the respective local authorities, within a specified time after the passing of the

Act, plans of all house drains, on an appointed scale. There the work for the year concluded.

In 1877 the second conference was held. The chief points considered were systems in connection with the disposal of sewage, and the entry of sewer gas into dwellings. This last had occupied scarcely more than an incidental position in the deliberations of 1876. It now, however, attracted a lion's share of attention. Concerning it, the conference passed this resolution:—

“That it is of the highest importance, in a sanitary point of view, that the metropolitan and local authorities should exercise great vigilance with respect to this matter (the entry of sewer gas into houses),* and that it should be made by law the duty of these bodies to enforce sufficient measures for the exclusion of sewer gases from dwellings, and to watch over their being efficiently carried out under such a system of payment as shall not press too heavily on those at whose charge the work is done.”

Another resolution of importance was that “the annual accounts of sanitary authorities should be prepared and published in sufficient detail.” This touched the general state of indifference which exists as to how rates are spent by parochial authorities. The tradesman, when supplying his customers, provides them with a bill for each transaction. Those who spend the rates should observe, or be compelled to observe, as strict a practice. Demands for payment of rates are very punctually and persistently made on the one side. But on the other side there is no corresponding zeal to furnish statements of how the rates have been spent, and the ratepayer relapses, as a rule, into a sort of belief that to seek such statements is to pry into the lawful arcana of a revered oracle.

At the third conference, which was held in 1878, the pre-

* The action of local authorities varies in different towns. For instance, the Municipal Authorities for Health in Leicester carried out a house-to-house inspection of drains in 1882. At Brighton however, possessing the same Parliamentary sanction, the Sanitary Authorities do not, I am told, consider themselves authorized to perform a similar piece of useful work.

vious topics were again under discussion, and the novelty in the programme was "whether any further legislation of a compulsory or permissive character for bringing about a better sanitary condition of towns or dwellings, or change in imperial administration" is needed. In the course of remarks upon "imperial administration," Sir Henry Cole dwelt upon want of information on sanitary matters as a chief reason for public apathy in regard to National Health. Without a larger amount of public interest, the central office (*i.e.*, the Local Government Board in London) for assisting the administration of Acts of Parliament, &c., cannot be expected to do all that is required. The Local Government Board was invented, he said, "in order to help people to get better health." Its "only function," he thought, "in the present state of matters is impartially to collect and publish information." "Why should not the Local Government Board tell us all that is going on in this country, and the various experiences of towns in this country, year by year?" "They ought to make it the business of its department to bring all these subjects before the public—and to do it periodically, not to do it by a jerk once in three years."

It is, perhaps, superfluous to point out that Sir Henry Cole was evidently inspired by the sense of a principle similar to that which the present President of the Local Government Board has, I believe, recently enunciated. This principle broadly seems to be, that the central administrative office is not the quarter from which active and practical operations for the preservation of health are to radiate throughout the country. Hundreds of active centres must exist. Every district must know its responsibility in protecting its health. Knowledge can be stimulated by publishing the results of sanitary work in various parts of the country, and thus giving every one an opportunity of comparing similar conditions, and deducing sound canons of practice from recorded experience. The supply of this recorded experience can be influenced, no doubt, by the central

department in London. Besides this, the central department, as the typical depository of the best knowledge, can, as Mr. Stansfeld described, through its local inspectors organize the relations between various health boards and committees which exist all over the country; and thus simplify the discharge of their responsibilities in providing for the protection of health. This simplification of duties may, perhaps, be slowly developing. In the meantime, however, there is, unfortunately, an abundance of causes—inoperativeness, and extravagance in using resources—from which springs a corresponding abundance of ill effects, such as deadly fevers and blood-poisonings. Mr. Broadhurst, M.P., has recently given notice of his intention to move for a comprehensive return of information as to how localities are taking care of their health. The more every one can acquaint himself or herself with these matters, the more will those who have charge of the practical work be likely to improve their practice.

Reverting once more to the conferences of the Society of Arts: early in 1878, the year of the third conference on National Health just referred to, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales addressed to the Chairman of the Council of the Society of Arts a letter upon the supply of pure water to the country. The question of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and other large towns taking steps to obtain an improved and increased supply of water, was at this time before the public. The Prince suggested "whether at the present time great public good would not arise from an open discussion of the question in the rooms of the Society of Arts." The Society gladly adopted His Royal Highness's valuable suggestion, and at once set to work to collect and print extracts from various reports of Government Boards, Royal and other Commissions, papers issued by societies, &c. The information was classified under headings such as "The Connection between Drinking Water and Health," "The Choice of Water," "The Examination of Water,"

"The Water Supply of Rural Districts and Small Towns," "The Water Supply of the Metropolis: some Engineering Considerations," and "The Origin and History of Official Inspection." A Congress upon National Water Supply was held on the 21st and 22nd of May, 1878. The following year, at the fourth conference, National Health and National Water Supply were combined for discussion; and precedence being given to Water Supply, the larger period of the two days' conference was devoted to it. In 1880 the title of the conference became "Progress of Public Health," Mr. Stansfeld, as before, acting as chairman, and the executive committee remaining the same. The business before the conference was—I. Administrative Organization; II. Amendment of the Law; III. Sanitary Inspection and Classification of Dwellings; IV. Further Suggestions by Sanitary Authorities. Resolutions were passed. The constitution of county boards to conduct the ordinary administrative and financial business of the country was recommended; and this has been referred to in the House of Commons during the present Session. It was thought that the administrative organization of the Local Government Board would be strengthened and improved if England and Wales were mapped out into a few large areas; each area to be under the administration of a staff of inspectors, the whole under the superintendence of a permanent head of the department. Amendments of the Public Health Act and the Pollution of Rivers Act were proposed.

This congress of 1880 is the last which has been held. When acknowledging the vote of thanks for having presided, Mr. Stansfeld said, "although he did not propose that these conferences should be annual, he did not believe he had seen the last of them." It is not within the purpose of this article to speculate when the next conference on National Health will be held by the Society of Arts. I may accordingly pass to Guilds of Health.

The proposal to form these Guilds was matured by my father

in 1881—that is, the year after the last of the conferences. He used to say, as many people do, “if you want a thing done you must do it yourself.” The conferences had undoubtedly extended his views upon National Health, and he felt that his axiom was peculiarly applicable to the preservation of health and the improvement of its conditions. People who want health-conducive conditions must very largely depend upon themselves to obtain them. Coming freshly to a large majority who have trusted in the sanitary science and art of builders or in the courteous assurances of landlords and house-agents, who have punctually paid their rates believing the payment to act as a security for the discharge of certain duties, and who are convinced that doctors’ bills are as necessary as butchers’, the advice may be thought to be superfluous. Guilds of Health may, however, prove that this is not so altogether. These Guilds are to grow out of the interest of individuals desirous of securing for themselves satisfactory conditions of health. As clubs are formed to meet the common requirements of a certain number of persons, whether in respect of social advantages, bodily exercise, the advancement of a particular branch of knowledge, or even the purchase of coals, blankets, or turkeys; so it is thought Guilds of Health may be formed to improve people’s apprehension of what they themselves can do, and get done, for the improvement of sanitary conditions. Health to most of us is such a matter of necessity, that it may not often occur to us that as individuals we have much to do with it. We, perhaps, look upon it as a sort of right, and when some interference with our right takes place, we class the consequences of the interference as coming within the category of an inevitable legacy, “the ills which flesh is heir to.” As an admission of a limit to our knowledge, the remembrance of this inevitable legacy may be very proper. But then, perhaps, too frequently we may be prone to shelter ourselves under the confession of our limited knowledge. There are, however, a

great number of persons who are anxious not to rest thus contented ; and these are the people who will endeavour to see if there is any merit in the proposal to found Guilds of Health. Finding some, they will set themselves to form a Guild precisely as they would form a cricket club or a musical society. The operation may prove likely to be rather more difficult. But the difficulties will, it is to be hoped, spur on action. Conversations amongst a few zealous friends will knit together the threads of a common interest, and the friends will find themselves agreed to act as a committee, and so become the nucleus of a Guild. They will seek for and obtain subscriptions, since some funds are indispensable, in order that printed notices concerning the objects of the Guild may be circulated for general information. The printed notices will contain some outline of what the Guilds of Health look to their members to do, and what advantages members may receive in return. The collection of a few simple rules and hints upon drainage, water supply, and general sanitation of houses, will be one of the first pieces of work to be undertaken by Guilds. There is a considerable literature in this direction ; and the National Health Society, 44, Berners Street, London, probably stands foremost as a centre from which much can be purchased. Besides this, however, there are sanitary boards and committees under vestries to whom the householder looks for the performance of certain work for which he pays rates. Guilds of Health will, therefore, collect information about these bodies, the performance of whose work often affects the comfort of householders and inhabitants of houses. But as sanitary committees or their officers are timid and retiring, by virtue perhaps of what they diffidently think is insufficient authority to behave otherwise, they do not as a rule come into houses to see how far their work outside the houses may be affecting the inhabitants. Doubts frequently exist as to how work both inside and outside may have been carried out. Guilds of Health may then

become, as it were, the intermediary, or the link, between householders and sanitary committees, and help to clear away such doubts. That the householder should have some sort of knowledge of the arrangements of the drains, cisterns, &c., in his house, is necessary. The Guilds may, therefore, be able to supply him at a small fee with a plan of these arrangements, supposing, as is usual, that the sanitary authorities of the district are not in a position to provide him with such a plan. In addition to this, Guilds may be useful to householders who are at a loss how to act, by placing the sanitary arrangements of houses in order. They would be able either to recommend or provide skilled labour for these purposes. In London there are one or two societies who undertake to look after such matters. Professor Huxley was the first president of the London Sanitary Protection Association, and it is understood that the Duke of Argyll has consented to succeed him. The objects of this association are: 1st, "To provide its members, at moderate cost, with such advice and supervision as shall insure the proper sanitary condition of their own dwellings," and, 2nd, "To enable members to procure practical advice, on moderate terms, as to the best means of remedying defects in houses of the poorer class in which they are interested." The Sanitary Assurance Association is an analogous body. There is no reason why, on a small scale, every parish should not provide itself with similar means for maintaining the efficient sanitation of its houses and cottages. In the meantime, however, cases of infectious diseases arise and are dealt with according to the usual routine. And here again London is awakening to the existence of a great field in which much work is required. In Westminster a Sanitary Aid Association has been established to look after the diminution of infection in the less favoured districts of that crowded neighbourhood. It endeavours to co-operate with the medical authorities of the district. Its objects are to prevent the spread of infectious diseases—small pox, scarlet, typhus, and

typhoid fevers, measles, &c. Very much as charitable visitors go amongst the poor, giving temporal and spiritual assistance, might sanitary visitors (members of Guilds of Health), under medical advice, visit from house to house, provide for isolation of the sick among families, teach the use of disinfectants, and ascertain how far they could co-operate with sanitary authorities, or supplement the official work which, by regulations or otherwise, sometimes falls short of the necessity.

Thus the work of Guilds of Health is not imaginary. It is a work to be done. Its extent must, of course, be regulated by circumstances. We have hitherto relied too much upon others to do work for us, and have suffered in consequence.

A few days before his death my father submitted his project of Guilds of Health to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and the Prince replied in most sympathetic terms. Expressing his deep interest in "so wide a question as that of national health, affecting in so high a degree the prosperity and happiness of the country," His Royal Highness felt "assured that every effort which tends to direct closer attention on the part of the public to the preservation of health and to the wide diffusion of simple rules bearing on the subject, is deserving of sincere encouragement. The labours of the Legislature to improve the broad conditions of health generally throughout the United Kingdom, and the efforts of all local sanitary authorities, should be supplemented by the knowledge and exertions of every individual." The Prince conceived "it to be most desirable that every one should make him or herself acquainted, not only with the elementary rules which science may give us, but also with the work of existing organizations for the preservation of good health;" and His Royal Highness "did not hesitate to express the opinion that it would be a most humane deed to set in motion measures by which every one could be encouraged and assisted in obtaining practical information in connection with this subject."

Such hopeful words have made me feel that my father's proposed Guild of Health is not a scheme to be left in a dormant state, but that it is one to be made as widely known as possible. Its adoption rests with individuals. The letters which have been addressed to me on the subject lead me to hope that the interest already manifested in it is growing, and will in time take practical shape. In the meantime, I hope to be able to collect information which may be of use in framing programmes for Guilds of Health. In some cases it may be desirable that Guilds should become centres from which general information upon sanitary matters should be inculcated. In others the peculiar requirements of the parish or district may be in the direction of practical work such as the London Sanitary Protection Association undertakes; whilst in others the special character of the Guilds may incline towards that of the Westminster Sanitary Aid Association. The model Guild of Health will no doubt be one which will endeavour to be equally active in all three divisions alluded to—namely, collection and publication of information, supply of professional advice and labour in respect of sanitary constructions, and active co-operation with medical authorities in watching over and limiting the spread of infectious diseases.

I shall be glad to furnish such further information as may be in my power to any one who may desire to have it.

ALAN S. COLE.

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ALAN S. COLE.

The Bogies of Provincial Life :

I. DULNESS.

A MOTHER having become alarmed about the failing state of her daughter's health, and not being able to get much satisfaction from a consultation with the village doctor, took her to a London physician for further advice. He asked a few questions as to the girl's daily habits and mode of life, carefully stethoscoped her heart and lungs, and then gave an involuntary sigh. The mother grew pale and waited anxiously for the verdict. "Madam," he said, "so far as I can discover, your daughter is suffering from a most serious complaint, which for want of a better name I shall call 'dulness.' Perhaps it is in your power to cure it. I have no medicine which is a specific for this disease." It is not every doctor who dares to be thus straightforward ; otherwise the same opinion would be given in hundreds of cases now labelled with some jaw-breaking technical term for the sake of politeness to the sufferer and her relations. It is no doubt far from pleasant to ventilate one's ideas on this subject. Parents think it impertinent to encourage their daughters in the notion that their home is dull, or that it makes people ill not to have some congenial occupation and cheerful amusements. They are quite shocked at Onora's depravity when she—

Looketh listlessly adown the garden walk :
I am weary, O my mother, of thy tender talk.
I am weary of the trees a-waving to and fro,
Of the steadfast skies above, the running brooks below.
All things are the same, but I—only I am dreary,
And, mother of my dreariness behold me very weary.

Yet is not this the cry that, were it not stifled, would express the feelings of many a blameless young English girl, as she stands, Sister-Ann-like, looking out of the window, longing for

something to come and release her from a life which seems to have grown to be little but a dreary imprisonment. It may be asked, What is the use of discussing a state of things for which we have no remedy to offer? But we think the dull daughters will not scorn a word of heartfelt sympathy, nor perhaps will their parents disdain to try and imagine themselves in their children's place, and recognize the fact that young women may be dull without being wicked. An indefinite, restless longing is the natural state of a healthy, vigorous-minded girl, when she has nothing to occupy her thoughts and her fingers, just as the vague flapping of a bird's wings, as it sits beside the nest, shows that it is ready for flight. When the most natural thing—marriage—does not take a girl from her old home to make a new one; if she has no regular employment, no outlet for her energies, no interesting companions, no amusements; it is surely scarcely a matter for surprise if she becomes listless or petulant, out of health or out of spirits.

There is a very important time in a commonplace girl's life, during which she rarely receives the amount of consideration and encouragement that she would probably require. It is when the school-room is exchanged for the drawing-room, and the irresponsible child is supposed to enter upon the duties and cares of life. In the numberless homes where "coming out" does not mean being presented at Court and a round of London gaiety, the sudden cessation of obligatory tasks, when not replaced by some definite employment, creates a blank difficult to fill in a satisfactory manner, unless the girl has some special talent she is bent on cultivating with ardour. Strong vigorous characters can accept the situation, and out of very poor materials build up a self-satisfying existence. No doubt a determined cheerfulness, a resolute independence, and constant activity may create, out of the most unpromising surroundings, a life at once busy and useful. But these characters are the exception, not the rule. Besides, if they cannot find work at home, they generally seek it elsewhere.

The life of the country and of country villages has changed a good deal in the last half-century. There are more openings for clever young men, who are draughted off to our large towns, or go to seek their fortunes in the colonies. The least clever and interesting ones remain at home. Everything tends to centralization; small businesses get swallowed up in larger undertakings. Education has created new wants and discontents. Simple pleasures are less enjoyed, luxuries more craved for. But even in the most retired and stupid places the young men have much the best of it in comparison with their sisters. Somebody wants to marry them! They go forth to their labour until the evening. Their money-making employments may be puny and diminutive, still they are sufficient to occupy their time and to make interests. The monotony and narrowness, the limitations and littlenesses, which probably reign supreme in their circle, do not affect them in the same way, nor with the same evil result, as in the case of their sisters.

The dulness of which we speak is most bitterly felt in those middle-class families where the income is sufficient to provide servants to do the household work, but not sufficient to afford the means of foreign travel or the pleasant social intercourse to which a large country-house lends itself so well. A girl feels refreshed by being obliged to exert herself in some manual labour, whether it be to bake the bread, wash up the cups and saucers, or weed the garden. Priscilla Lammeter says, with her keen good sense, "There's nothing like a dairy, if folks want a bit o' worrit to make the days pass. There's always something fresh with the dairy; for even in the depths o' winter there's some pleasure in conquering the butter and making it come, whether it will or no. You'll never be low when you've got a dairy." But there are countless homes in which we may fairly say there is nothing half so interesting as a dairy to occupy the time and attention of the young women. The mother prefers to retain the housekeeping in her own hands. The daily needs

of life are supplied with faultless regularity. There is sufficient food, warmth, and raiment. The gardener does not like to be interfered with. The wants of the parish can be attended to by the family of the clergyman. There is no incentive to outdoor exercise, for country roads are dreary when there is not any object to be attained by walking on them. So rare are visitors, that the ringing of the hall-door bell brings everybody's heart into the mouth. The sight of a stranger's face passing the gate, is enough excitement for a whole week. The days drop one after the other like leaden bullets, and the years are only marked by a fresh almanack. Christmas is as heavy as its attendant plum-pudding. Summer only enables the dulness to be transferred from the fireside to the open air. There is a slow but sure destruction of strong desires and fruitless yearnings; a pathetic self-suppression, a hopeless stagnation, which even the spirit of youth ceases to fight against.

It is the custom to sneer at the cheap novelettes, which seem to be written almost expressly for these girls. But knowing that they have a very large circulation, they are to us most interesting, and have a world of meaning. They indicate what are the hopes and desires of their readers, and what dreams occupy their long reveries. The plots are not borrowed from French novels. If somewhat mawkish, they are as a rule singularly pure and moral. There is a certain delicate pathos and undercurrent of tragedy in the stories. They abound in pretty descriptions of rural scenery and simple country life; but even the fertile imagination of the novelist does not lead the authors of these fictions into the mistake of making the pleasant things come as a matter of course. They are always a lucky accident; some out-of-the-way and not to be expected turn of events. In a great number of cases the heroine is obliged to "go out" as a governess. By leaving home she is enabled to become acquainted with a gentleman above her in station, rich and handsome, or clever and ugly. He soon

declares himself her lover. There are misunderstandings and difficulties with his family, but the heroine's beauty, amiability, and accomplishments break down all barriers, and she is made happy for life with an unexceptionable husband. Another well-worn plot turns on an empty manor-house, in which a solitary girl wiles away her unoccupied time in studying the old family portraits, and wondering whether the mysterious absent heir is as handsome as some of his gallant-looking ancestors. Of course she is caught in the picture gallery by the owner, who returns without giving any warning to prepare the stately housekeeper for his arrival. At once the hero becomes captive to the charms of the heroine, and makes her mistress of the long-deserted old abbey. No doubt more wholesome reading might be found for our middle-class young women ; but, after all, is it not the hope of some wandering prince being wafted out of his natural track to Sleepy Hollow that makes life worth living to many a girl? Could she be robbed of the natural sweet romantic hopes of some happy future, and shown her life in its naked arid reality, would much good be done, supposing her training to have been such as to unsuit her for better things? Perhaps the most melancholy result of lack of wholesome occupation is, that it induces women to involve themselves in unworthy love affairs, and to embark in imprudent marriages. They want some excitement to fill their empty minds and lives, and they grasp at anything which promises a variety in their monotonous existence. They have not strength of character to refuse what they know from self-respect they ought to refuse—an unsuitable marriage.

Like the London physician, we have no nostrum to offer for this deadly disease of dulness, which reckons its victims by the thousand. We must trust to the more enlightened parents of the future to stamp it out at any cost. All that we can offer at present is a sympathetic sigh.

M. J. LOFTIE.

Reviews and Views.

CARLYLE becomes almost pathetic when we see him practising the most familiar of all forms of self-deceit. He made in the volume of his fatal Reminiscences which bore the title of "Jane Welsh Carlyle," a great and penitent confession of his shortcomings towards his wife ; he beat his breast so mournfully, and shed so many tears, that the reader hastened to console him mentally—if that were possible—and to assure him that his sins were not very heavy. What, after all, did they amount to?—an uncompanionable temper, an absorption in work, too much silence, an inevitably constant call on the forbearance and patience which the wife of an invalid is by all laws bound to practise, and—most definite and most bitter self-accusation of all—the postponement of the buying of a brougham, with that tearfully-told incident of walking to an evening party and the shedding of goloshes on the way, which, for a hard-working author of the *roturier* class, married to a middle-class wife, and living on middle-class means, did not precisely seem to the reader to be tremendous brutality. There was really little else to be discovered, and poor Carlyle's self-denunciations were sadly accepted as another proof of that awful power given to the beloved dead—their power

to make

The whole world blasted for their sake,

through our ever unavailing and ever incommunicable self-reproach, no less intolerable if it is all unjust, or but half just. But see, now, how the sincere but cunning penitent was "whipping the devil round a stump!"—the profane Americanism must positively be allowed in the irresistible circumstances. He made his penitence with remorse, but kept back the gravest facts of his offence. We have here all the deceitfulness of real sorrow, all the disingenuousness of a heart truly broken and crushed, all the infinite paradoxes of humanity.

Nothing could be more common—nothing, therefore, more curious. Carlyle's actions and thoughts and accusations in this matter are among the numberless secrets of the common-place world—are among the mysteries and histories of the majority. We know now, that not only did his gloomy humours afflict his wife, but his savage temper frightened her ; that the kisses and tenderness of an old nurse gave her the first happiness she enjoyed during many months of his cold disregard ; that she was not allowed to enter his room, except to do housemaid's work there ; that he neglected her, not always for his work, but sometimes for the smiles of women of the world ; that she was uniformly a confessedly unhappy woman, who coldly gauged her own failure in her choice, and the misery of her marriage. And we now know this by the will and decree of Carlyle himself. Who will not say that, though Carlyle's fame has dwindled down, he has surpassed all that was dreamed of him as a genius by the wonderful actualities of the ordinary man ? He babbled volubly about silence, he declaimed affectedly about veracity, his books are chief of the wind-bags he abhorred ; but he himself was an every-day living inconsistency, compared with which those antitheses and contradictions of his art become insignificant.

While Carlyle's name is again, this time insomuch as it was assumed by his wife, upon men's lips, it might be well to inquire upon what points he will regain or retain his hold upon the thought of England. As far as can now be told, his influence will rise or ebb with the teaching of Schopenhauer. There is a dreadful secret which has been whispered between Carlyle and the thinkers of our day—it was the only thing he whispered and did not shout—and its name is Pessimism. It weighed upon his common complex heart ; he is profoundly pathetic in some moments of intimate despondency ; and long after the mischief he did to the English language and to the national notion of right and wrong has passed away, his sigh will still, one cannot but fear, be finding echoes.

"A Journalist who sometimes Rhymes" contributes the following lines on "Primrose Day," saying:—"I trust MERRY ENGLAND—all professional printing prejudices notwithstanding—will not follow bad example and throw a slur on Poetry by putting it into smaller type than is used for Prose. But when you print rhymes like these which I send you, and which may, perhaps, sneak into print because they treat of a current topic, smuggle them in among the 'paragraphs' in bourgeois or in nonpareil, to distinguish them from the poetical poetry, to which you accord all the glory of primer or of pica;" which I accordingly do:

PRIMROSE DAY.

WHY dedicate the primrose lowly
To this proud Pillar of the State?

In fields of asphodel
His shadow flits—we know it well.
The amaranth and moly
Beseem him wholly.
A bolder flower and more complex
Will better mate his mind ornate,
His affluent fame,
Than this which, timorous, decks
Our April fields, and flecks
Our April forests with faint flame.

But even as when
The Seer passed out of sight of men,
And people cried :
"What flower shall shroud him?" Nature's self replied :
"Take ye the pale primrose
That, unappropriated yet,
(With the meek violet—
Imperial chosen !) blows
In his belovèd woods at Hughenden :"

So says our England at this hour
Of him who gave to her his dower
Of strange romance and effort strong,
And purpose that outdid his power,
And service half-a-century long :
“ He was not of our clime nor race ;
The Orient owned his speech and face ;
His mind was Eastern as his mien : ”
Yet, since he served our England thus,
And won the worship of our Queen,
Henceforth we hold him one of us
In thought, in feeling, and in fame,
By linking our familiar flower
For ever with his name.

J. O.

In his work this year Sir Frederick Leighton appeals to exquisite taste by his three pictures of little girls, and to ordinary sensibilities by the more obvious feeling of his “ Memories ” and “ Vestal. ” The former title is borne by the head and bust of a lovely woman who has a past, and whose broad blue eyes are full of sadness ; she leans on her large arm ; and ample black and gold draperies are thrown over her head and neck. The “ Vestal ” is an almost transparent face, with a beautifully-painted white veil hiding all but the pure profile from eyes to chin. In the children the artist has done something more true and exquisite. The simple “ Yasmeneh, ” who is at the Fine Art Society’s exhibition of pictures of childhood, in her white dress with its gold ribbon and its purple pansy, has apparently sat also for “ Kittens, ” a gorgeous bit of colour. The innocent profile of the child, and her soft gold hair, treated with that lightness and yet massiveness, that unity and yet separateness, which make the difficult triumph of hair-painting, are placed against a rich gold background in which there is a passage of strong light. She leans sidelong with the unconventional loveliness of action of a child, to play with a kitten near her ; her robe, girt high under the arms with a broad sash, is of an opulent purple, and other magnificence, which must have been

studied from peacock's feathers, glows in the colours of the accessories. The portrait of Herr Joachim's little niece has the vigour and substance which distinguish the President's sketches. In colour it is as fresh as it is rich.

Again, the pictures of the year are chiefly portraits, in the eyes of those who regard quality. Foremost is Mr. Millais's portrait of his brother Academician, Mr. Hook, who is painted with grave realistic feeling. In the expressive eyes there is an intent and attentive look, subdued by a kind of melancholy which is not soured by discontent. The white hair and beard are painted quietly, but with a brilliance of execution; and the flesh is admirable in the vigour of the touch. One hand holds the palette, the other is thrust into the pocket; and the way in which the thick folds of the brown coat are heaped back has been managed by the artist in his frankest manner. This is evidently the work which his fellow-artists hold to be Mr. Millais's highest achievement in several years. Mr. Watts, a great critic as well as a great painter, considers it one of the few pictures which might have been painted by Rubens. Mr. Millais's portrait of the Marquis of Salisbury is less striking, on account of the smoother roundness of the forms; but it is full of character, treated with dignified restraint rather than over-insistence.

The Duchess of Westminster's portrait is finely drawn, but posed with a certain ultra-English rigidity. It is to be noticed, too, that Mr. Millais always treats feminine costume in a way which is rather emphatically insular, but perhaps none the less pleasant for that. The same artist's pictures of little girls are also virtually portraits, the most charming being the round-faced village girl, who stands shyly delivering "A Letter for the Squire." Next to her must be placed a sweet-toned study of a little sylvan maiden in white,

and rather chilly pink, with some cool and delicate greyness in the background. In her hand she holds a bird, which gives the picture its title, "Fallen from the Nest." In contrast with the tenderness of this, is the brilliancy of the little "Great Lady," who is clad in a yellow brocade, and holds a small parrot on her finger; and of the portrait of Mrs. James (the painter's eldest daughter), in which the fresh carnations of the animated face and the blue silk of the hat are given with dazzling effect. A tight white dress, decorated with exceedingly narrow turquoise blue ribbons placed far apart, is another instance, by the way, of Mr. Millais's manner in millinery. In his "Grey Lady," the artist has given us something more of a subject. In very bright moonlight a graceful ghost, clad in the ghost of a long grey sacque, stretches out her pale arms as she glides through the corridors of a moated grange.

Mr. Hubert Herkomer, A.R.A., exhibits a large number of portraits, determined and vigorous works, in which the emphasis is at times almost overwhelming. If it is a true canon of art which commands that masculine portraits shall be a trifle over life size, Mr. Herkomer has, we are inclined to think, carried a good rule rather far; but the strong character of his work, and the impulse and spirit of his execution are admirable. The portrait of Herr Joachim is doubtless the best, for it seems to be painted with the most restraint of power. Next comes the wonderfully true and direct study of Mr. Stanford, who stands in a little slouching way which the artist has caught with a kind of affectionate appreciation; both hands are in the pockets, and a *pince-nez* adds interest to the rather short-sighted gaze. The whole figure is memorable. Dr. Garrod, Sir Arthur Bass, Lord Eversley—who is in the act of speaking, his face thoughtfully intent upon the sentence of the moment—Sir Richard Cross, and Herr Richter, in whom the German character is displayed with great intelligence and breadth, these are only some of this most industrious painter's works in the noble art of portraiture.

Mr. Hubert Herkomer's house at Bushey is one of the most interesting, as well as one of the most busy, of the abodes of our painters. It was "S. G. O.," if I remember right, who called his house "The Hive," a name which suggested to a greater man of letters—Sir Henry Taylor—that of "The Roost," for his own home in Bournemouth. Were Mr. Herkomer thus to catalogue his dwelling, he would find it difficult to fix on any name which could properly describe it. It is, above all things, a place of happy labour. It has, of course, its dining-room—not so large as to suggest much lounging over meals—and its drawing-room, which persuades one that there is little withdrawing to it from that literal drawing and painting room, the studio. And round that studio cluster many workshops—that in which the young painter's father works at his wood-carving, and those in which Mr. Herkomer etches and engraves, and in which his plates are printed under his own care, and pressed and dried. Yet the house is now only in its beginnings, a great scheme having filled the heart and head of its owner, whose own words, in a letter written from Boston at the end of March, and just received from him by a friend in England, his frankness will permit me to quote.

This scheme Mr. Herkomer describes as "a great dream of my life, and of my father's life. It is to be a house," he says, "which shall stand as a lasting monument of the skill of three or even four Herkomers—my father, my uncle (who has remained in America all these years), and another uncle (also here), who is a weaver, and will make all the curtains. My uncle John is an exceptionally clever carver, and through this plan his troubles in life (of getting his honest work to compete with that of men of doubtful ways) will be over. It was indeed a day when we all met again at Cleveland, after an absence of twenty-five years. I built before I left home large workshop-studios, in which *everything* connected with the house

is to be made ; and here we have selected the best of the necessary time-saving machinery, and have learnt much generally in methods, means and ways, that only the ingenious American is capable of. All this is to be started in the autumn, and the whole inner structure, with its elaborate carving, is to be finished before we touch a brick. We three cannot do it all, and shall of course have our assistants. I cannot devote more than a certain portion of the year to it. So you see how the aspect of things has altered ; new to me it is not. I was only watching and waiting to see its possibility in the future. Now it has come, and many a heart in my circle beats with more than ordinary emotion."

That Mr. Herkomer's visit to the United States has been a series of triumphs for him will surprise nobody. "Of my visit here," he says in the letter we have already quoted from, "I can only tell you of success, and of a host of friends, and of excessive work. My portraits seem to give great satisfaction, and I am working as hard as I can. Here in Boston I have had as many as five sitters a day. These are, indeed, lovable people ; I cannot speak too highly of them, and I shall never cease to feel gratitude towards them for the way in which they opened their hearts to me and to those with me. A friendship that is binding and lasting is formed here rapidly. In the 'Emigrants at Castle Gardens' I have the most remarkable subject I ever had to tackle, and the most difficult. But how little we in England know of the *true* state of things here. Those reporters who get hold of the badly selected items to send over to papers in other countries do some of the mischief. Besides, the known and long accustomed and accepted characteristics are not easily dismissed by us on the other side. You must *live* here, and in no country in the world is a man more quickly found out than in the America of to-day." So it seems, in the case of Mr. Herkomer himself.

